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OCTOBER 1952

W. H. MORRIS JONES

Politicians and Generals

M. J. C. HODGART

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POLITICIANS AND GENERALS

W. H. MORRIS JONES

1

EACH country takes for granted those things which its history has either solved or enabled it to avoid. British history has been both long and fruitful; hence our capacity — a source equally of pride for us and irritation for others — to ignore certain problems which present themselves urgently elsewhere. The demarcation of religious and secular spheres of influence and control; the reconciliation of racial, national and class aspirations; the emancipating of public government from the dictates of private gain — these, the open wounds of political strife in most countries, have with us in great measure been healed. Yet the health of the body politic is never completely assured; the strongest constitution is subject to disease, the firmest tradition to exhaustion and erosion. All we can do is aim at constitutional adaptability, choose a political diet which suits us, and see that our doctors have understanding.

The relation between the civil and the military powers in a state has been little studied in this country. The problem has not been wholly absent, but its dimensions during at least the last two and a half centuries have not been such as to cause anxiety. Nevertheless, its theoretical fascination and practical relevance alike invite attention.

2

Consideration of the role of force in politics is as old as consideration of politics. The minds of pagan and Christian, ancient and modern alike have sought to elucidate the basis of power. In no place and at no time has there been any lack of support for either of the two opposing viewpoints — that force is the essence of the matter, however elegantly it may clothe itself, and, *per contra*, that 'will, not force, is the basis of the state', even if that will requires at times to assert itself by means of arms. It may, of course, be true that this classic debate tends to dissolve as soon as either the 'force' school admit (as they must) that their 'essence' is indeed a complex thing which shades off almost imperceptibly through threats and warnings to propaganda and persuasion, or the 'will' exponents confess (as they too must) that a perfectly uninfluenced consent is scarcely conceivable. More to the point for our present purpose, however, is the common ground which both sides of the controversy share. The argument is about the importance of force as an instrument of state power. Both views tend to assume that the instruments of force

stand in the same relation to the state as tools to the craftsman. One view may hold that the use of this particular tool reveals the craftsman's imperfections, the other that it demonstrates the real nature of the man; either way it remains a passive tool. This is surely a most unpromising assumption.

Moltke once described the army as 'the most outstanding institution in every country, for it alone makes possible the existence of all civic institutions.' Now Moltke's views cannot be presented as typical of the military mind outside Prussia, but they are no more than an extreme statement of an attitude which is far more widespread than is generally realized. Few things are more natural to the army mind than the belief that politics is a luxury generously and tolerantly conceded to human frailty by the real preservers of security and order. This attitude, clearly, is not that of a section disposed to accept the passive role of tool in the hands of the master-politician.

There are, indeed, several reasons why one should expect armies to have distinct and positive attitudes of their own.¹ The profession of soldier, more perhaps than any other, is set apart from the rest of the community by its uniforms and rituals, by its barrack and mess life, by its special terminology and training and by the rigidity of its discipline. Moreover, though priest and lawyer have at times enjoyed supreme prestige, neither has held a more consistent position in public estimation than the warrior. It is a further advantage of his calling that it serves society in a most obvious fashion and serves it not through individuals (as a lawyer serves clients and a doctor his patients) but directly. Again, the dramatic and urgent character of the threat to a society implied in war or rebellion tends to place the soldier — and especially the general in the field — in the centre of the public limelight.² Every profession looks scornfully on the layman, but none more than the soldier. His greatest scorn is not unnaturally reserved for those laymen from whom in most cases he has to take his orders — the politicians or, as General Sir Henry Wilson used so expressively to call them, 'the frocks.'

All this means that the relation between civil and military powers is of necessity both delicate and subtle. The use by the state of force implies the existence of armed forces. The character of these forces ensures that effective civilian control is a difficult venture in which victory is never final and complete.

¹ A careful account of these attitudes is still required. In the meantime, some clues are provided by memoirs of military leaders (e.g. GENERAL SIR W. ROBERTSON: *Soldiers and Statesmen*) by their occasional systematic reflections on their careers (e.g. LORD WAVELL: *The Good Soldier*) and sometimes by the observations of lay outsiders who for a period found themselves in contact with the military profession (e.g. O. SITWELL: *Great Morning*).

² It may, of course, happen that the General who is the hero of the press and public is not the hero of those immediately under his command.

3

In not all countries, of course, does the problem present the same pattern. In a military dictatorship, political and military powers are one and there would appear to be no problem at all. But in practice such situations tend to prove unstable; conflicts either between different armed services or between different factions within a service arise easily, and the tussle for civilian control of the military power is simply replaced by a struggle between parts of the military for control of the civil power. The opposite situation, in which the holders of civil power themselves become the military leaders, is equally unstable. It is, moreover, essentially unfeasible in view of the specialization which has been a necessary result of the development of modern arms.

A more common variant of the pattern occurs in modern party dictatorships. Civilian control of the military power is replaced by party control over both civil and military institutions. The party has to conquer the professional and caste-like resistance of the armed services, and this it does partly by persuading the professional soldier towards a party code of ideals and standards and partly by injecting into the caste some of the party's own trusted lieutenants. These processes, of course, have been seen at their clearest in Hitler Germany and the Soviet Union.

But we in the west are still concerned with the more conventional pattern of relatively distinct civil and military institutions. It may be said that the problem of political control of the armed forces is really the same problem of the amateur and expert which is found in the relations between ministers and their civil servants. But the special character of the armed forces increases the difficulties greatly; 'a caste jealous of its position and privileges, impatient of criticism and conscious of its own special knowledge' — this would be a caricature of the civil service but it is a fair sketch of the military. In the first place, the military expert, more than any other, will tend to be 'on top' rather than 'on tap' if only for the reason that the consequences of rejecting his advice may be catastrophic in the most obvious way. It may be true that every newspaper reader can be an armchair strategist and it is certainly a fact that some political leaders have shown little reluctance to interfere in the business of generals. But on the whole due recognition is given to a formidable area of military expertise and certainly the consequences of politicians' trespassing in that area have more often than not been unhappy.¹

The delicacy of civil-military relations in a democracy does not, however, rest only in the difficulty of challenging military expertise; it

¹ Among the most interesting studies of this point are General Sir Frederick Maurice's account of the relations between Jefferson Davis and General Lee in *Governments and War* and F. H. HINSLEY: *Hitler's Strategy*.

arises even more from the tendency of the military leader to become dissatisfied with his own area of discretion. This happens in various ways. The powerful general staff may be able to exert not only decisive control over military affairs but also significant influence over neighbouring fields of policy such as foreign affairs or industrial mobilization. More serious in recent years has been the tendency for the chief military leader in a particular theatre to become involved in the highest political decisions and negotiations concerning that area.¹ It may also happen that leaders of the armed forces transfer their energies entirely to politics; Britain (Wavell and Mountbatten) no less than France (de Gaulle) and U.S.A. (Leahy and Marshall) can provide examples from very recent history. The importance of this is that it involves in some degree the carrying over into politics of certain military attitudes of mind and ways of thought.

Enough has perhaps been said to indicate that civil-military relations have a significance more general than might at first glance be realized; the army coups d'état in Syria and Egypt, the alleged army plot in Pakistan, the position in Siam where 'since the possession of arms would appear to be the most important factor in the holding of power... the leaders of the Army have controlled the Government for most of the time since 1932'² — these are but a few dramatic salients in a continuous line.

4

Civil-military relations in the west may be delicate and subject to tensions, but at least they operate within and are to some extent moulded by an established constitutional framework. In no country was the creation of this framework an easy matter, but it was in England that some of the awkward problems were first tackled.

It may be said in general that just as the emergence of standing armies in place of the smaller, temporary, largely knightly armies of the middle ages marked the rise of absolute monarchies, so the mass army and distrust of the standing army come with the liberal-democratic revolutions.³ On the continent of Europe and especially in Prussia, the new mass armies of the French Revolution posed the problem of how to modernize and increase military efficiency without giving way to popular or liberal influences. The great names of Prussian militarism — Gneisenau, Clausewitz, Scharnhorst and others — were among those who sought an answer. But the army

¹ While few generals are born politicians, there are those who have had politics thrust upon them (perhaps some of the U.S. generals who had to deal with the Free and Vichy French) and others who by their own efforts achieved political notoriety (of whom MacArthur is an outstanding example).

² A. S. B. OLVER: 'The Political Game in Siam', *The Listener*, August 9th, 1951.

³ See A. VAGTS: *History of Militarism*.

was still a noble profession and the revolutions were halted before they had penetrated deeply into military life. Even in France the 'advances' secured at first — close civilian control, the new *Ecole de Mars*, and so on — were lost; the call of 'enrichesiez-vous' proved so seductive that the military castes were able very largely to recover any lost ground.

This is not, of course, to say that a regime of harmony existed between politicians and generals. On the contrary, the nineteenth century witnessed nothing so much as a continuous tussle for and against the 'liberalization' of the armed forces. One of the key issues was the effective responsibility of a War Minister to his parliament rather than to the general staff. Another was adequate parliamentary control of the army budget. Again, liberal forces sought to reduce the size of armies¹ and to strengthen the politically more trustworthy militias. These issues were solved differently in different countries, the point of compromise being closer to the militarist position in Prussia than elsewhere.

In England, similar conflicts had taken place somewhat earlier. The importance of the army in our seventeenth century politics is well known.² In the eyes of Parliament only the militia (which would 'defend but never conquer us') was to be trusted, not the army — and this in spite of the extraordinarily 'liberal' sentiments of its Commander in Chief, General Monk, who said: 'I think it is the duty of my place to keep the military power in obedience to the civil. It is the duty of us all to defend the Parliament from which you receive your pay and commission.'

The conflicts were resolved on the constitutional plane by that important part of the Bill of Rights which declared illegal 'the raising or keeping a standing army within the Kingdom in time of peace unless it be with the consent of Parliament,' and by the practice of granting moneys for this purpose for no more than one year at a time.

The formulation of a principle and its formal acceptance is a step of some importance; argument and action tend thenceforth to be conducted within certain bounds. But the Bill of Rights left ample room for two centuries of ambiguity and manoeuvre before anything like a settled arrangement could be discerned.

Before there could be effective civilian responsibility for military affairs, at least three steps had to be taken. First, some order had to be brought into the realm of military administration which was still, in 1815, described as one of 'exquisite confusion.' So long as

¹ On this point, army opposition was not consistent; small, select professional armies always had their attractions for the military mind. This was in part what was meant by the Prussian general who said 'I hate war because it spoils armies'.

² See J. S. OMOND: *Parliament and the Army* which takes the story up to the present century.

military affairs remained the concern of fifteen quite distinct and jealous offices, each conducting its relations with the others through the most formal and leisurely correspondence, there could be no co-ordinated responsibility of any kind, whether civilian or not.

Disaster in the shape of the Crimean War came to save the situation, rather as cholera saved our public health. But the separate offices were thrown together in haste; unified administration came only with time, for a team has to work together before it begins to look or act like a team. It is not surprising that Florence Nightingale, writing four years after the paper unification, could judge the War Office to be 'a very slow office, an enormously expensive office, a not very efficient office and one in which the Minister's intentions can be entirely negated by all his sub-departments and those of each of the sub-departments by every other.'¹

The solution of the administrative jig-saw puzzle made political responsibility possible. But which of the King's Ministers was to bear the responsibility? The creation of a Secretary of State for War seems an obvious step to take — now that it has been taken. The direction of reform was by no means clear at the end of the eighteenth century. There was a Secretary at War who issued orders and regulations to the Army on behalf of the King, but the division of labour and responsibility between him and the Secretaries of State was most uncertain. It was a hopeful move in 1782 to make the Secretary at War responsible to Parliament for army finances, but confusion was restored by the appearance in 1794 of a distinct Secretary of State for War. It seems likely that only the addition in 1801 of colonies to the burden of the latter enabled the arrangement to persist, for in practice colonial government absorbed the main energies of the Secretary of State for War and allowed the Secretary at War to continue almost undisturbed. Only by 1855 was it irresistibly clear that the answer was one Secretary of State for War with responsibility for the whole army and nothing but the Army.

The third problem concerned the relations between the civilian Minister and the head of the army. After the death of General Monk, in 1670, no Commander-in-Chief had been appointed in peace time. When the Duke of York filled that position in 1795 and thus joined the two secretaries as another party to military policy, the triangle of forces became complete.² The ambitions of the Duke of York, the influence of the Duke of Wellington, the interest of the Queen and

¹ It is, however, more surprising that this verdict could still be considered apposite in modern times. See WINTRINGHAM: 'The War Office' in *Political Quarterly*, April-June, 1942.

² It should not be thought that naval affairs were at this time in any better shape. The existence of a Board of Admiralty (corresponding to the C.-in-C.) as well as a Navy Board (corresponding to the Secretary at War) gave ample scope for misunderstanding and paper warfare.

Prince in the Army and their sympathy for its sturdy independence of interfering politicians — all these help to explain why the consolidation of civilian responsibility in the hands of the Secretary of State for War in 1855 left this problem unsettled. The appointment of the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief in 1856 ensured a fairly equal struggle between that office, with its headquarters in the Horse Guards, and the War Office. It was generally true, as Disraeli said, that 'you cannot get a Secretary of State for War to resist the cousin of the Sovereign' but it was less true of Cardwell than of most. 'I contend', he said at the time of his appointment in 1868, 'for the principle of plenary responsibility to Parliament on the part of the Parliamentary head of the department and consequently for the absence of all reservations, expressed or otherwise, from the authority of that officer.' Contend was just what Cardwell had to do. Not until the Duke was persuaded in 1895 to resign and his place was taken by Lord Wolseley was any appreciable reform possible. The direction of change had been indicated by the report of the Hartington Commission which the Queen had described as 'really abominable' and which had sent the Duke into emphatic capitals with 'CATASTROPHE'. The main recommendations were three. First, a Naval and Military Council under the Prime Minister was to co-ordinate the two service departments. Second, the office of Commander-in-Chief was to be abolished and replaced by a G.O.C. in Great Britain for the actual command of home forces and a Chief of Staff as advisor to the Minister on military policy. Third, military departmental heads in the War Office were to have their policies concerted by the establishment of a War Office Council on which they would sit with civilian members.

'Under a Parliamentary government like ours,' said Lord Wolseley 'it is no easy matter to devise a system that will maintain the army on purely military lines and under the sole command of soldiers, and will also give the Secretary of State for War the general control which is necessary under our constitution.' It was indeed difficult, but when in 1904 the War Office Reconstitution (Esher) Committee underlined the findings of the Hartington Commission, the Government acted promptly. The Naval and Military Council appeared in the form of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the office of Commander-in-Chief was indeed abolished, and an Army Council was formed of civilian and military members under the Chairmanship of the Secretary of State.

5

This is not the place to do more than sketch in this way the constitutional development of civilian control of the armed forces of England. Nor is it possible here to describe how similar control came

to be established in, for example, France and the U.S.A. By the outbreak of the first world war, constitutional rules and administrative techniques for the exercise of this civilian control had been worked out in most countries. There were, of course, differences of some importance. The special influence and power of the army in Germany¹ naturally caused a considerable dilution of the principles of civilian control.² In France and the U.S.A. certain features of their constitutions placed the problem in a setting different from that of ours.

But rules and techniques still require to be interpreted and operated by particular people in particular situations. The year 1904 settled many questions so far as England was concerned but left many still open. One of these is the choice of the War Minister; is it desirable that he should be someone who already has some military background and knowledge? One of the most successful American War Secretaries was Elihu Root who certainly had no special military knowledge.³ One of the most successful British War Ministers was Lord Haldane who came to the job from a life devoted to law, philosophy and education. Haldane indeed, emphasized his position as layman — on one occasion by paying tribute to Root: 'I do not need to know anything about armies and their organization, for the five reports of Root are the very last word concerning the place and organization of an army in a democracy.'⁴

There is also some evidence of the difficulties which tend to flow from the appointment to the office responsible for civilian control of

¹ It is worth emphasizing that this influence was connected with its prestige in the eyes of the people. Reichswehr Minister General Groener probably shocked few of his compatriots when in 1931 he described the Army as 'the first servant of the State . . . the rock upon which the State is built'. There may have been some exaggeration (but not sufficient to make it worthless as evidence) in the statement of C.G.S. General Beck in 1937: 'Our people in their *pietas* towards the Army place a confidence in the Wehrmacht which hardly knows limits . . . To them it is both people and State . . .' (Both quoted in 'The German Army and Hitler' in *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 9th, 1950.)

² This was, of course, even more true of Japan where military affairs remained in effect largely outside the ordinary system of ministerial responsibility to the Diet. 'In the criticism of the military authorities, the politicians have been under the necessity of confronting equals in the political arena rather than servants of government.' (See K. W. COLEGROVE: *Militarism in Japan*.)

³ The telephone conversation between Root and the White House at the time of his appointment shows that President McKinley, in making the appointment, regarded Root's ignorance in no way a disqualification. 'The President directs me to say to you that he wishes you to take the position of Secretary of War.' 'Thank the President for me, but say that it is quite absurd. I know nothing about war, I know nothing about the Army.' 'The President directs me to say that he is not looking for anyone who knows anything about war or anyone who knows anything about the army.' (P. C. JESSUP: *Elihu Root*, p. 215.)

⁴ P. C. JESSUP, *op. cit.*, p. 240. Also, for example, HALDANE: *Autobiography*. When the Army Council asked him what his plans were, 'my reply was that I was as a young and blushing virgin just united to a bronzed warrior and that it

anyone with special military knowledge or experience. It appears, for example, that the exceptional military knowledge (for a layman) possessed by Haldane's predecessor in office, Arnold Foster, handicapped rather than helped him; it caused some resentment among the military leaders and it made it difficult for him to study military advice with an open mind and accept the opinions of others.¹ The case of Lord Kitchener points even more emphatically in the same direction. He found it difficult to avoid the temptation to be Chief of Staff as well as War Minister. His prestige among the military was such that his War Office staff were seldom prompted to put forward alternative views and there was therefore little sifting of opinion among the experts. His own identification with the army made it virtually impossible for him to serve the Cabinet as a critic and reviewer of military policies. Moreover, Kitchener's stubbornness and lack of imagination were a source of anxiety to the politicians, some of whom certainly felt that these traits were professional as much as personal. Thus, for example, Lloyd George's withering accusations: 'War Office policy seemed ever to be that of preparing not for the next war, but for the last one or the last but one . . . The Great War caught our military thinkers planning under the conditions of the Crimean War in so far as these were modified by the irrelevant experiences of the African veldt. Military imagination makes up in retentiveness what it misses in agility.' In the same way, Kitchener's awkwardness and unease at Cabinet meetings were those of one profession on finding itself in the territory of another. His reluctance to communicate information and opinion in discussion appears to have been due partly to 'the soldier's inability to explain' but even more to his professional distrust of politicians; 'my colleagues', he complained, 'tell military secrets to their wives, except — who tells them to other people's wives.'

Even if it can be said that the evidence points to the desirability of a lay head at the War Office,² the exact relations of Minister to

¹ See R. MACGREGOR DAWSON, 'Cabinet Minister and Administration; War Office, 1903-1916' in *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, November, 1939. According to General Sir F. Maurice (op. cit.), Jefferson Davis was similarly handicapped in his dealings with Generals, whereas Lincoln was able, at least with Grant, to work out a suitable and smooth division of responsibility.

² That this conclusion is not generally accepted seems to be indicated by the recent (October, 1951) appointment of Brigadier Head as War Secretary, though it is interesting to note that since the appointment the title 'Mr' appears to have been preferred by the Minister.

was not expected by the public that any result of the union should appear until at least nine months had passed.' Again, in response to the question of the kind of army he had in mind: 'My answer to them was "a Hegelian Army". The conversation then fell off.'

Generals still have to be determined. The dividing line between policy and strategy is in particular cases no easier to find than that between policy and administration. It is the problem, that is to say, which arises in relations between any Minister and any permanent official. But it is rendered even more difficult because of the special characteristics of armies and their leaders.

It is clear that co-operation rather than strict delimitation is required. 'None of the main plans which are necessary for a war,' wrote Clausewitz, 'can be made without insight into political relations, and people say something quite different from what they mean when they talk of the harmful influence of policy on the conduct of war. It is not the influence but the policy which is to blame.' Or, in Clemenceau's famous words, 'war is much too important a business to be left to the soldiers.' But how much is to be 'left to the soldiers'? Haldane's view was that 'it is for the Government to define the objectives, just as it is the duty of the Government to answer the preliminary question between peace and war. When this is done, the carrying out of what is aimed at is for the leaders of the forces . . . The service leaders will have to be constantly on the look out for civilian complications, and in so looking out they will be dependent in part at least on civilian advice.'¹

This general principle is no different than that which might be used to guide any Minister or any civil servant. Mr Churchill's statement of the Admiralty position is similar: 'The First Lord is responsible to Crown and Parliament for all the business of the Admiralty. He delegates the responsibility for its technical and professional conduct to an eminent sailor, but he is strictly accountable for all that takes place. I exercised a close general supervision over everything that was done or proposed. Further, I exercised an unlimited power of suggestion and initiative, subject only to approval and agreement of the First Sea Lord on all operation orders.' Yet Mr Churchill's own relations with Sir Arthur Wilson indicate that perhaps the position is not quite the same as with non-service civil servants. 'I sent him a minute about the creation of a Naval War Staff. He met it by a powerfully reasoned and unqualified refusal and I then determined to form a new Board of Admiralty without delay.'²

More explicit recognition of the special problem set by civilian control of the armed forces is to be found in Lord Hankey's *Government Control in War*. There he makes three points of particular interest. First, that in strategy the views of the three service chiefs must usually prevail, though even here the last word must remain with the statesman. Second, Commanders in Chief should be given a free hand and the statesman should intervene only in the last

² See W. S. CHURCHILL: *World Crisis*.

¹ Quoted in MAURICE: *Haldane*.

resort. Third, Commanders may be asked to consider alternative plans but should rarely be asked to carry out plans in which they do not believe. General Sir Frederick Maurice in his *Governments and War* expressly rejects any parallel between civilian-military relations and ordinary Minister-civil servant relations. There is no comparison, he suggests, for three reasons. 'War is not a science nor a business but an art' and no sensible layman will tell an artist how to paint his portrait. Again, a commander cannot be expected to carry out plans with which he disagrees, for the morale of all concerned would suffer. Most convincing is the third reason: that a commander, unlike a civil servant, is never anonymous and therefore it is in practice impossible for the Minister to take the whole responsibility, for the public will insist on giving praise and blame to the general too.

6

In a talk at the Staff College after the first world war, Lord Haldane expressed the view that there were 'few questions in which such obscurity prevails as in those concerned with the higher direction of war' and further that the strains between soldiers and statesmen during 1914-18¹ 'arose largely at least from want of knowledge on the part of our rulers in what the higher direction of war really consists.' Haldane's sanguine attitude towards the power of instruction in this matter may be difficult to share, but the attempts of American writers in recent years to throw light on this dim area are certainly welcome.² Attention may here be drawn in particular to two recent studies.

The first is a history of civil-military relations in France during 1914-18. Professor King's *Generals and Politicians* describes the events and tensions and uncovers the factors at work — and does so diligently, clearly, entertainingly. It is the story of how France 'groped its way by trial and error from the military rule of Joffre to the ministerial firmness of Clemenceau.'³

Although the book consists in the main of a closely packed narrative, the author has included an introductory chapter in which 'the background to the conflict' is discussed. This is useful; but the criticism must be made that nine pages is inadequate for this task. It is not as though Professor King's is a specialized essay on a general theme already very familiar and adequately dealt with in existing

¹ LORD BEAVERBROOK: *Politicians and the War* gives a vigorous review of these.

² Among a number of interesting publications is *Civil-Military Relations in American Life* (edited by J. G. Kerwin). There is much interesting material, of course, in such works as the memoirs of Secretary Stimson (*On Active Service in Peace and War*) and the *Forrestal Diaries*.

³ KING, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

literature. A more elaborate analysis of the general problem would have served well to indicate the significance of the material which follows. A further weakness is that the restricted scope of the introduction renders difficult any attempt to distinguish those elements of the background which are peculiarly French. Such elements are, of course, mentioned, but all too briefly.

The cleavage between Revolution and Reaction has given a special intensity to the struggle in France between civil and military power. From the day in 1793 when the Committee of Public Safety decided to appoint the representatives on mission partly at least to exercise supervision over the military commanders whose loyalty was suspect, from that moment 'in conservative circles the military enjoyed a vast prestige', while 'among the sons of the revolution most generals were regarded as bulwarks of reaction.'¹ Moreover, very little had happened since 1793 to modify these strong impressions. The militarism of Bonaparte had in part succeeded by its success but its revival under Napoleon III led to the disaster of Sedan. The fact that 'the prestige of the professional soldiers, having reached its nadir, was miraculously restored by the success of Marshal MacMahon in subduing the communard uprising', only aggravated the association of military might and political Right.² The 'fiasco of Boulangerism' and *l'affaire Dreyfus* underlined the same point. This was indeed a most unpromising setting for the co-operation between generals and politicians which 1914 made urgent.

The relations between the Cabinet and the two houses further increased the difficulties. In particular, the rights and powers of the parliamentary commissions of army, finance and foreign affairs prompted many disputes. Civilian control of the armed forces thus meant parliamentary inspection as well as ministerial policy-making. This not only supplied an additional point of friction where the irritation of the generals at the interfering politicians was matched by the impatience of the politicians at the authoritarian and secretive generals; it also placed ministers in the delicate position of intermediaries between deputies and generals; they had to fight on two fronts, checking the over-eager parliamentarians and mollifying the injured commanders. It is an interesting fact that military men as War Ministers (Generals Gallieni and Roques, for example) often showed greater toughness towards their former professional col-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7. 'The military sins of Sedan were atoned by the sacrificing of the *canaille* at "The Wall of the Federals" in Père Lachaise cemetery, where the workers' bid for power was at last suppressed, to the grateful relief of the property owners, the monarchists, and the clericalists... Radicalism was discredited for a generation, and the ideological alliance between the military, the monarchists, the church and the *grande bourgeoisie* remained cemented as firmly as ever.'

leagues than civilian War Ministers who sometimes became no more than mouthpieces for the military leaders.¹

These factors provide clues to the important crises which marked the unsteady movement 'from the initial military dictatorship through a gradual recovery of parliamentary authority (to) virtually a civilian dictatorship in the hands of the chief of the executive power.'² The great battle in early 1915 between Pedoya on behalf of the parliamentary commissions and Millerand on the right of investigation ended in a partial victory for the former, but both sides were exhausted in the process. The next engagement, later in the same year, took place on a broader front. The popularity of General Sarraill — 'the only republican general' — with politicians of the Left clearly provided explosive material — especially since General Joffre was so jealous a guardian of his own authority and influence. The circulation of anonymous memoranda praising the political reliability as well as the military prowess of Sarraill ensured that an explosion would take place. It came in the form of Joffre's abrupt dismissal of Sarraill which angered a substantial number of deputies and embarrassed most of the ministers.

The difficulties inherent in any separation of policy and technique were amply illustrated by two of the major civil-military conflicts of the war: the disputes about the adequacy of the Verdun defences in 1916 and the advisability of General Nivelle's offensive of 1917. Both cases had much in common. The confidence of the ministers in the plans of the military leaders had been undermined — in part by the criticisms offered by the military men (Gallieni and Lyautey) who on both occasions occupied the post of War Minister. On the other hand, the ministers had insufficient confidence in any alternative military leadership to risk changes. Moreover, they were apprehensive about the effect of any dismissals on the public, which might have become anxious and indignant.³

French experience during 1914-18 does not speak very clearly on whether the War Minister should be a civilian or a soldier. Civilian ministers often capitulated too readily to military opinion, even when they had the gravest doubt about its wisdom. On the other hand, a military man like Lyautey tended to err in the opposite direction. He

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66. Writing of Millerand, Professor King says: 'only an ox could have remained indifferent to the thousand stings of the parliamentarian gadflies ... He had displayed a firm devotion to the High Command which even transcended his sense of obligation to President of the Council Viviani or to his fellow Cabinet members. The war minister yielded ground to the (parliamentary) army commissions as begrudgingly and stubbornly as humanly possible.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 192.

³ It is clear that Joffre made use of his standing in the public eye to get his own way with the politicians. Threats to resign produced on more than one occasion the required retreat on the part of 'interfering politicians'.

found it difficult to avoid trying to conduct operations himself. At the same time 'he had no awareness of parliamentary views and preconceptions' and was 'as inept in the realm of politics as he had been capable as a colonial administrator.'¹

What French experience does underline is the value of an exceptionally strong personality at the head of a war government. Not that all went smoothly once Clemenceau became Premier. The conflicts between him and both Petain and Foch are well known.² Only after he had called all bluffs and asserted himself unmistakably did 'the Tiger' set about establishing a reasonable division of responsibility based on mutual confidence. Yet even here tension between civil and military was never far away, and it was in a sense appropriate that the armistice itself was the occasion for a further misunderstanding culminating in what Foch called 'a pedantic lecture (from the Government) on constitutional law and the limitation of power.'³ General Gallieni's comment on an incident in 1916 can serve as a judgment on the whole period: 'Decidedly, if the military do not understand the parliamentarians, the parliamentarians do not understand the military.'⁴

7

The second study covers a longer period but is concerned with a special aspect only; Professor Huzar's *The Purse and the Sword* is an examination of the control of the Army by the American Congress through military appropriations during the period 1933-50. It is a minute and painstaking examination, but this alone does not account for its 400 pages; these are also the result of the most tedious and unilluminating repetition as well as of the welcome insertion of excerpts from Congressional Hearings.

Professor Huzar has perhaps been more anxious to contribute to an understanding of Congress than to deal with the subject of the present essay, but although this work has to do not with civil-military relations generally but only with the points of contact between legislators and the army,⁵ it gives some material for answers to two interesting questions: how far does the American political setting transform the general problem of political control of the

¹ Ibid., p. 142.

² The most familiar incident is the violent silencing of Foch by Clemenceau at the Supreme War Council: 'Shut up! It is I who represent France here!' (Ibid., p. 211).

³ Ibid., p. 241.

⁴ Ibid., p. 106.

⁵ More precisely, with one of the points of contact. Professor Huzar concentrates his attention on the committees on appropriations and is interested in the Committees on Military Affairs (since the Defence unification of 1949, the Committees on Armed Services) mainly in so far as they affect the former.

military? and has the nature of this problem changed in the last thirty years?

The makers of the American constitution inherited the fundamental English attitudes and were anxious to find protection from militarism. Already the Declaration of Independence had voiced the complaint that the English King had 'affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power,' while the Virginia Bill of Rights had stressed the importance of the military being 'under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.' *The Federalist* recognized the need for some standing army but saw also that this institution bore 'a malignant aspect to liberty and economy.'

The dilemma was to be avoided only by means of safeguards. Three of the safeguards envisaged by the Founding Fathers were (or were to be) familiar in Europe. The land army would be kept small and reliance would be placed on the politically safer naval arm.¹ Secondly, militarism would be checked by giving the government 'full power to call forth the militia', the 'noble palladium of safety' as the Virginia Bill of Rights called it, the citizen-soldiers who bore a less malignant aspect to both liberty and economy than a standing army. A peculiarly federal safeguard was the maintenance of the States' militias as independent forces. Finally, and most important, control of the armed forces was to be political — and that, 'in an age when all executive authority was suspect among Americans', meant Congress control.² The sword of the union would have to be wielded by the President, but that was not so dangerous if Congress had the authority to declare war, to raise and support armies, and to provide and maintain a navy. Any irresponsibility on the part of Congress was further checked by the provision that 'no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years' and in fact appropriations, as in Britain, have been and are made for only one year at a time.

The constitution-makers believed that they were better protected against militarism than the British because, in Madison's words, 'the powers of government are *more* limited and guarded, and our representatives are *more* responsible than the members of the British House of Commons.'³ This indicates their view that the differences were of degree, not of kind. And this was a reasonable view at the time.

¹ Thus, as Professor Huzar points out (op. cit., p. 9), Madison echoed Blackstone's view that from navies 'no danger can ever be apprehended to liberty' when he reflected that the forces 'most capable of repelling foreign enterprises on our safety are happily such as can never be turned by a perfidious government against our liberties'. The continued prestige and romantic appeal of navies probably owes less to this feeling than to other factors.

² Ibid., pp. 18-20. As George Nicholas told the Virginia ratifying convention: 'If you are really jealous of your liberties, confide in Congress'.

³ Ibid., p. 21. The italics are mine.

Subsequent constitutional and political developments in the two countries have somewhat altered the nature of the contrast. In the first place, the House of Commons has been reformed and the simple difference in responsibility noted by Madison has given way to more subtle differences. The U.S. congressman may, for example, be more responsible, in the sense of responsive, to pressures from his constituency; a good deal of the interest displayed by appropriation Committees has been of this kind.¹ On the other hand, he may be in another sense less responsible than the British M.P.; his duty to defend the Legislature against the wicked Executive may obscure for him his duty to conceive and pursue the common good.²

In the second place, the separation of powers which the Americans developed from English experience gradually disappeared in the home country. It is true, as we have seen above, that the separation took longer to disappear in the case of military matters than elsewhere; parliamentary conquest of the prerogative powers of the Crown was delayed until the latter half of the nineteenth century where the armed forces were concerned. But certainly the present position in the two countries offers a contrast more of kind than degree. The British political head of a service department (or, of course, the super-head of all three) confronts his expert military advisors as a representative of a coherent cabinet in control of a coherent legislature. The position of his American opposite number is very different. He finds himself at one corner of a triangle of forces, the other two corners of which are occupied by the military and by the independent and not infrequently hostile legislature. Indeed, 'triangle' may be an oversimplification. For one thing, inter-service tensions may be so marked that a Navy Secretary may feel that his main adversary is not Congress nor the Admirals but the Air Secretary. For another, cabinet coherence may be so weak that a Defence Secretary has to spend much of his time conducting a running fight with the State Department, the Bureau of the Budget and even the President himself. It may be allowed that such tensions are present but in less open and public form in Britain; but that does not dispose of the contrast; indeed, the very openness of the conflicts in the U.S. is a factor making for their greater importance.³

¹ 'Members of the subcommittees have used the hearings to get from the War Department authoritative statements — and revisions — of policies affecting "folks in my district"'. "I am going to ask the committee to pardon me for a moment while I act as Senator from the State of New York", says a member of a Senate committee'. (Ibid., p. 67.) It is doubtful if a member of a House of Representatives committee would feel it necessary to apologize in that way.

² It can, of course, be argued that in Britain duty to party sometimes has a similarly disturbing effect.

³ There is much interesting evidence on all this in *The Forrestal Diaries*. Particularly fascinating is the account (pp. 474-5) by Forrestal of how, after attending

It would be reasonable to expect that a consequence of the separation of political powers would be a weakening of the ability of these powers to maintain effective control over the armed forces and military policy. Professor Huzar's work, being concerned only with that part of political control which part of Congress (viz., the Appropriation Committees) exercises, does not supply material for a complete judgment on this. But his book does underline the partial nature of Congress control. 'When they come before us . . . we are obliged to take their word. We ask them as many questions as possible in an effort to get the facts in order, to have an idea of how they plan to carry on, but, in the end, we appropriate blindly, so to speak.'¹ This general picture of Congress helplessness is overdone but it is more true of Congress control over military affairs than of its control over civil administration. To a considerable extent Congress has to accept the Administration's requests where defence is concerned.

This is partly because of the formidable character of military expertise and technical knowledge which has generally overcome some Congressmen's distrust of militarism. In war-time, it has been the result of a more radical abdication in favour of 'those who know best.' Sometimes it follows from the tendency of politicians to become so 'committee-minded' that they identify themselves more with the department they are intended to watch than with the

¹ Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, *Organization of Congress* (1946), quoted in HUZAR, op. cit., p. 384.

a meeting of the Canadian Defence Committee of the Cabinet, he became acutely aware of the differences in governmental structure. 'One of the deep impressions that I had as a result of this meeting was the contrast to the functioning of our own government . . . This group was not merely the Defence Committee of the Cabinet . . . but they also represented the control of the Canadian Parliament, because they are the chosen Ministers of the Liberal Party, which is the party now prevailing in power, as well as the chiefs of their respective government agencies. Therefore expressions of policy at this meeting are the statements of a responsible government. The link between the military and the civilian government is obviously provided by the presence of the three military Chiefs of Staff. The Cabinet Secretary provides the link between this particular committee and the entire Cabinet.' It was with obvious envy that he compared this with his own position: 'By contrast, in the American Cabinet the appointees of the President are responsible to him but their main job is to sell Congress. They do not speak for the government in the sense of reflecting party control of the Legislative branch. Therefore the decisions they take are decisions only in the sense of an effort to merchandize a particular idea to the really controlling power, the power of the purse. In the formation of our military budget, for example, the power of the Secretary of Defence is really one of recommending to the President what he thinks should be spent in what proportions between the various services. After he has made such a recommendation it is a free-for-all before the Appropriations Committees . . . who, if they are of an opposite political control, are quite apt to take particular delight in altering the budgets sent up by the executive.'

assembly they are intended to represent.¹ More generally, it is, of course, a result of the limited experience, competence and interest of laymen in this field. Congressmen have concentrated on economy; it is the malignant aspect armies bear to this which has attracted their attention. They were perhaps less vigilant on this side during the war than they were before or since, but it was still 1943 when Senator Truman declared that the armed services 'know how to waste money better than any other organization I have ever had anything to do with. They do an excellent job on the waste side . . . I could stand here all afternoon and give example after example showing that tremendous sums of money are simply being thrown away with a scoop shovel.'²

It remains true that the appropriation Committees have nevertheless affected military policy. Sometimes it happens that financial control is made to serve a political end which carries with it a change in military policy, as when in 1948 'some Congressmen were reported to favour a larger air force as an alternative to the politically more unpalatable prospect of voting for universal military training.'³ More often military policy has been influenced simply by the financial limits imposed by Congress. The evidence in Professor Huzar's book does not, however, show that this influence has been as marked as General Bradley in the 1949 House Hearings pretended: 'Under our form of government, the military policy of the United States is shaped by the Congress not by the armed forces . . . because Congress controls the appropriations which in the final analysis . . . control the military policy . . .'⁴ The House may have been pleased to hear that but it must have known that the final analysis is seldom reached. Within the limits of the appropriations, Congress has seldom interfered with the military priorities proportions. And in so far as the total sum has restricted military plans, it has been more the work of the Bureau of the Budget than of Congress.

On military administration, Congress has exerted perhaps greater influence. Questions of personnel, equipment, supplies and organization have appeared to be subjects more within the grasp of laymen and interference has been bolder. In the thirties, for example, Congress even went so far as to lower the ratio of officers to enlisted men by voting to increase the number of the latter.⁵ Even here, however, wide discretion has been left to the military administrator because, as General MacArthur argued before the Senate Committee, in 1936,

¹ Thus Representative Snyder at a 1944 House Hearing: 'We as a committee are very jealous of the War Department because we have been working with you and we do not like to see any fault found with the War Department.' (Quoted in HUZAR, *op. cit.*, p. 207.)

² Quoted in HUZAR, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

'these things are properly functions of the technical services, and they should not be hampered by an endeavour to control them.'¹ Freedom of movement for administrators has been facilitated by the grant of lump sums, the use of contingent funds, permission for transfers among the appropriation heads, and so on.

Professor Huzar recognizes and regrets the weakness of the Committees in face of expert opinion and the tendency to concentrate on costs and details. He urges that they should be strengthened and enabled to 'raise their sights' to matters of military policy and programmes.² He suggests that they should for this purpose be assisted by having their own staffs. This is a curious proposal. If the Appropriation Committees' work is unsatisfactory it is partly because of an unclear division of responsibility between them and the Committees on the Armed Services, and partly because of the general attitudes encouraged by the separation of powers. Neither of these defects is cured, both might be aggravated by such a step.

There is much less to be said on our second question, how far the problem of civil-military relations has changed in recent years. *The Purse and the Sword* does not touch the heart of this problem which, in American terms, would be located within the Administration, in the relations between Chiefs of Staff and Secretaries and in those between service departments and the Defence Secretary on the one hand and the Bureau of the Budget and the President on the other. Nevertheless, the impression is gained that the mutual understanding of politicians and soldiers has improved as a result of the war. Congressmen may still be primarily concerned with economy and the duty of not trusting the Executive, but the war has made it difficult for them not to become more aware of the relations between policy, strategy, resources and finance, and to that extent politically more mature. At the same time, the professional soldier has often had intensive experience of co-operative action with the civilian in the production of a joint war effort and he tends to be less remote and less assertive than his predecessor. 'I think', said General Eisenhower as Chief of Staff in 1947, 'the War Department understands thoroughly its place in this Government and does not try to usurp anybody else's place . . . We recognize where the policy-making responsibility lies; and no matter what is done, we will be in there pitching to carry out exactly what we are told to do.'³

8

We have argued that the problem of civil-military relations, while confined in the west within varying constitutional structures, can from its very nature never be anything but difficult and delicate. The two works we have considered in some detail do nothing to alter

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 321.² *Ibid.*, p. 398.³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

this view. Each demonstrates how the character of the constitutional forms and political life of a country may aggravate the essential problem but, equally, each underlines the existence of this essential problem.

At the same time, there appears to be a *prima facie* case for believing that civil-military relations have become smoother in recent years. The story of the war of 1939-45 seems to reveal the same tensions — between one service and another, between allies, between politicians and soldiers — as were evident in 1914-18. But while the inter-services battles and the disagreements between allies seem to have been as vigorous as ever, the gap between civilian and military points of view appears to have narrowed. It might be that the gap had appeared to close simply on account of the presence of a strong Churchill or Roosevelt. On the other hand, it would not be surprising if it really had done so. Neither the soldiers nor the politicians had perhaps lived so far away from each other during the inter-war years as they had done before 1914. Moreover, the nature of the last, 'total' war, by further blurring the distinctions between 'home' and 'front', 'military' and 'civilian', may have forced a radical revision of attitude on all concerned; the concept of a joint effort by the two distinct political and military arms of the nation may have been replaced by that of a single effort in which some specialization was still convenient. Again, the widespread institution of military government at the end of the war may have worked in the same direction.

These possibilities require investigation, by the study of such documents, memoirs and other material about the recent period as have become available. This examination must be reserved for treatment in a separate article. On the answer to this question, however, depends our attitude to several important tendencies of the present time. For example: if it can be shown that the military mind as a distinct and peculiar product of a segregated caste has been modified out of existence, the post-war careers of Marshall and Mountbatten, Eisenhower and de Gaulle will cause no special concern; if not, the invasion of the political world by men who have grown up in a wholly different climate may be serious. Or again: everyone recognizes the close interdependence of foreign policy and defence preparations — both within each state and in inter-state associations such as U.N.O. and N.A.T.O.; but the organization of this connection, and in particular the role to be given to the leaders of the armed forces, will be viewed very differently according as to whether or not these military chiefs are regarded as representatives of a distinct and ancient tradition little affected by the moulding processes to which political traditions have been subjected during the last hundred and fifty years.

WORK IN PROGRESS

M. J. C. HODGART

I HAVE never met anyone who claims to have read Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* with enjoyment. An excellent paper read by Mr Henry Reed a few years ago to the most avant-garde audience in Cambridge aroused no response whatsoever. My literary acquaintances tell me that it is hopelessly obscure; that Joyce had no right to take such liberties with the English language; that it is 'not a novel' and is lacking in common humanity; that it is probably a practical joke. Clearly the first reproach is the most serious and on it the others depend. Its force will be felt by those who, charmed by Joyce's earlier work or perhaps by the gramophone record of 'Anna Livia Plurabelle', open *Finnegans Wake* for the first time; and admitted by those who, like myself, have been trying for a long time to decipher the work. Yet the book sells: in England, after the first edition of 1939, there have been new impressions in 1946, 1948 and 1949, and a new edition in 1950. The reason for this moderate success cannot simply be intellectual snobbery, but must be that some readers find the work, if not deciphered, at least not undecipherable. In fact, in the twenty-eight years since the first fragment was published, it has yielded up many of its secrets. The greatest help has been given by the *Skeleton Key* of Campbell and Robinson but there have been many other useful books and articles.¹ The main plan of the work, its basic themes and characters, have been made known. It is unnecessary in this essay to do more than mention the plot (the dreams of one man during one night), or the characters (H. C. Earwicker, a Dublin publican, his wife Anna, his twin sons Jerry and Kevin, his daughter Isabel, his servants and customers), or the mythological basis (a resurrection myth typified by the ballad of Tim Finnegan) or Vico's cyclical theory of history, or Giordano Bruno's dualistic metaphysics, etc., since all these have been well

¹ JOSEPH CAMPBELL and HENRY MORTON ROBINSON: *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (New York, 1944; London, 1947). The best of the others are: *Our Examination round his factification for incamination of Work in Progress*, by SAMUEL BECKETT and others (Paris 1929, London 1936); FRANK BUDGEN: *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934) and 'Joyce's Chapters of Going Forth By Day', *Horizon*, IV, no. 21, 1941; EDMUND WILSON, essays in the *New Republic* (1939) reprinted in *The Wound and The Bow* (1943), and see also his *Classics and Commercials* (1951); HARRY LEVIN: *James Joyce* (Norfolk U.S.A. 1941, London 1944); L. A. G. STRONG: *The Sacred River* (1949); W. Y. TINDALL: *James Joyce, His Way of Interpreting the Modern World* (N.Y. and London 1950). See also ALAN PARKER: *James Joyce: A Bibliography* (Boston, Mass. 1948).

expounded. Again, a reader can quite easily learn what kind of linguistic and narrative devices to expect of Joyce, such as puns, portmanteau words, coinings of words from Indo-European roots, concealed quotations, parodies, Wagnerian Leitmotiv, symbolism and allegory and so on. But a great deal remains to be done before the book can be properly defended against the other charges that have been laid against it. Most of this will lie in tracing the allusions and cross-references which abound in every page and sentence, and in deciphering whole passages completely. I have no doubt but that this will be achieved in the near future by the joint efforts of many enthusiasts, and the first part of this essay is offered as a contribution.

If the task seems like *Psyche's*, it must be remembered that thirty years ago *Ulysses* was regarded as impossibly difficult to read by all except a small avant-garde; while today it is widely read and understood, thanks to the common knowledge which has spread from the researches of Mr Stuart Gilbert and others. In another thirty years, provided that Joyce's prestige remains high enough to stimulate research, *Finnegans Wake* may be almost as generally accepted and enjoyed as *Ulysses* is today. Only at that point will literary criticism proper begin. The first step towards tracing the allusions is to discover the range of Joyce's reading. Joyce was very much a man of his age, the age of the great synthesizers of history, mythology, folklore and psychology, like Spengler, Toynbee, Frazer, Freud and Jung. Like Yeats and Spengler he drew from Vico an overall cyclic pattern to impose on the flux of history. In tracing the erratic progress of Earwicker's dream monologue he naturally took many details from Freud, particularly for the theme of unconscious incest: his characters discourse in a series of Freudian errors ('freudful mistakes') which reveal their true motives. A motto for the book might have been taken from Montaigne, 'Chaque homme porte la forme entière de l'humaine condition',¹ since Earwicker is the archetype of all heroes from Adam to Charles Stewart Parnell; Jung's theory of archetypes is therefore part of the structure. It does not seem necessary for a reader to know more than the outlines of Freud's and Jung's work, whereas the Dying God as expounded by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* is the central point of the book. The death and resurrection of Attis-Adonis-Osiris in all his avatars is treated most fully in Book I, chapters 3 and 4 (never more beautifully than on p. 58: 'They have waved his green boughs o'er him as they have torn him limb from lamb') but also keep appearing throughout. In his wealth of relevant mythological allusion Joyce resembles Milton, but in justifying the ways of the gods to men he goes beyond the classics and the Old Testament, to Hindu, Egyptian, Norse and

¹ Montaigne, II, 2, Du repentir.

Celtic mythology. For the last, he seems to have used among others R. S. Loomis's *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, which traces the Round Table cycle back to Irish and Welsh legends. Acknowledgments to this, as to all his sources, seem to be hidden in the text. He found one of the most potent forms of the resurrection myth in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, as my analysis of a particular passage will show: the famous Judgment also provides a parallel to the trial of Earwicker by his own guilty conscience. Joyce seems to have used the translation and notes by Wallis Budge (1901), by means of which many passages like those on pp. 415 and 418 ('The Ondt and the Gracehoper') may be deciphered.

In his desire to synthesize all literature and thought and to trace correspondences between all things, Joyce approaches not only Frazer and Jung but the tradition of the occultists, Gnostics and mystics. The *Skeleton Key* has traced many references to the *Cabala*. In his elaborate symbolism and his dualistic theology, Joyce is partly a Manichean heretic, but his fantastic occult superstructure rests on a foundation of orthodox Catholic thought. A reader must know something of the dogmas, rites and hagiology of the Roman Catholic Church. Joyce's thought is basically Thomist and Aristotelian. 'Horseness is the whatness of allhorse', his summary of Aristotle in *Ulysses*, becomes in the melting-pot of *Finnegans Wake* 'a positively grotesquely distorted macromass of all sorts of horsehappy values and masses of meltwhile horse' (p. 111), still recognizeably Aristotelian in this dreamworld 'where the possible was the improbable and the improbable the inevitable'. One of his favourite theologians was St Augustine: Earwicker's Dublin, whose streets and buildings are so lovingly named, is the City of God. After Vico and Bruno, Joyce's main philosophical masters seem to have been Berkeley, Hegel, Carlyle and Bergson, and indirectly Einstein, Eddington ('the expanding universe'), the anthropologist Lévy-Bruhl ('collective representations'), and J. M. Dunne (precognitive dreams).

So much for the general bases of Joyce's thought, which are usually acknowledged by the briefest of allusions. Hardly less important is a group of literary works which are continually referred to by paronomasia, quotation, or parody, and often provide themes for the work. First, he naturally uses many of the books about night, sleep, visions and dreams: the *Somnium Scipionis*, medieval dream-allegory, Bunyan and *Revelations* (the last two are found at the beginning of Book III), Tennyson's *A Dream of Fair Women*, *The Tempest* ('We are such stuff as dreams are made on') and, as we shall see, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Like Proust, Joyce loved the tales-within-tales of the *Thousand-and-One Nights* (e.g. p. 4, 32): Haroun-al-Raschid wandering among his people in disguise is often used as a parallel to the metamorphoses of Earwicker. Next, there

are all the Irish writers, 'Goldsmith and Burke, Swift and the Bishop of Cloyne', down to the very minor poet Denis Florence McCarthy (who on p. 452 is combined with Lawn Tennyson of the *Idylls* as 'Tennis Flonnels Mac Courther'). Swift and Sterne, whose tradition of learned and Rabelaisian wit Joyce follows, form one of the main 'types' of the opposing forces in Joyce's dualistic universe. Swift appears as 'Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver', as Cadenus, 'bagateller', prince of triflers, writer to Stella; even his critics are mentioned ('elrington bawl', pp. 55-6): Mr L. A. G. Strong has pointed out many of these references. Oscar Fingal O'Flaherty Wills Wilde represents Finn-Earwicker's homosexual fantasies: in 'The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly' he is addressed as 'Fingal Mac Oscar Onesine Bargearse Boniface' (p. 46).

As we know from *Ulysses* Joyce was an ingenious Shakespearean scholar, who credited his readers with detailed knowledge of the plays. Apart from *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the most frequently cited are *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, representing the darker levels of the hero's subconscious, his murderous and suicidal impulses. There were only a few other writers for whom Joyce had a special veneration. Blake was one and Ibsen another, especially the late Ibsen of *John Gabriel Borkman* and *When We Dead Awaken*. Other writers have been chosen because they have furnished well-known quotations to be punned on, or because they have a peculiar relevance to the themes. Lewis Carroll is of course the authority for portmanteau words: typically he usually appears as Dodgson and Alice as Liddle. Critics have mentioned Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* as the source of Joyce's assumption that all symbols, forms, and human institutions are properly clothes, temporary envelopes for eternal Ideas (the Hero's disguises are listed in detail), but have failed to point out the close similarity between Carlyle's description of his own book (*Sartor*, I, iv) and Joyce's of his (*Finnegans Wake* I, v, especially pp. 119-25): '... the most unequal writer breathing. Often after some such feat, he will play truant for long pages and go dawdling and dreaming, and mumbling and maundering the merest commonplaces, as if he were asleep with his eyes open, which indeed he is ... Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs.'

Often the key to a passage is the identification of the work that is being parodied. The authors of the *Key* have discovered that the above-mentioned passage of Book I, ch. 5 also takes off the language of Sir Edward Sullivan's description of the *Book of Kells*, while it has been found that two passages (pp. 362 and 543-5) about slums are derived from Rowntree's *Poverty*.¹ The much-admired phrase

¹ See a letter to *The Times Literary Supplement*, November 23rd, 1951, from Mr J. A. Atherton.

'Copious holes emitting mice' turns out to be based on a social-worker's report, 'Large holes admitting numbers of mice'. Joyce has made literature out of one of the least attractively written books he can ever have read. There are allusions to Burns's *Tam O'Shanter*, since Tam's spying on Cutty Sark parallels Earwicker's alleged misdemeanour in the Phoenix Park; they are to be connected with the fairly frequent motif of witchcraft. A pair of learned works from Cambridge seem to have had a special influence on Joyce's handling of mythology, namely Dr Rendel Harris's studies of the twin motif.¹ According to this theory twins in mythology may be recognized by their similar names: hence Joyce's frequent use of doublets like Shem and Shaun, Bronto and Brunto, Mick and Nick, Tim and Tom, etc. Again, Harris maintained that the Heavenly Twins, children of the Thunder-god, patrons of marriage, medicine, sailors and horses, survived in many of the 'double' saints, like Crispin and Crispinian, of Christian hagiology. These ideas are embodied in *Finnegans Wake*, particularly the notion found in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas that Judas Thomas or 'Didymus' was the twin of Christ; both 'Thomas' and 'Didymus' mean 'twin'. That is part of the explanation of a passage at the end of 'The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies' (p. 258): '... even Garda Didymus and Garda Domas ... Pray-your-Prayers Timothy and Back-to-Bunk Tom.'

As is well known, there are a huge number of misquotations of popular songs in the book, many of them perversions of Tom Moore's *Irish Melodies*. Embodied in the text are hundreds of arias and ballads from the normal repertoire of a tenor, and on the whole rather low-brow. Because the story of Tristan and Isolde is part of the plot, Joyce refers to Wagner but not nearly as often as to the Anglo-Irish 'Ring', *The Lilly of Killarney*, *The Bohemian Girl* and *Maritana*. The *Lily* is used for its arias ('The moon hath raised her lamp above', 'The Cruiskeen Lawn'), for its librettist, Dion Boucicault, and for its plot: the rivalry of the twins for the hand of Izod, most fully adumbrated in Book II, chapter 1, is figured in the triangle of Hardress Cregan, Myles na Coppaleen and the Colleen Bawn. H. C. Earwicker is identified by his hump with the sinister Danny Man (p. 14, 621). Sometimes the triangle of the *Bohemian Girl* is used as well, as on p. 246. 'Et la pau Leonie has the choice of her lives between Josephinus and Mario-Louis for who is to wear the lily of Bohemey, Florestan, Thaddeus, Hardress or Myles.'

A reader may object that even this by no means complete survey of the source material shows that Joyce has made far too many demands on him. But surely much of this knowledge, with the excep-

¹ *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*, C.U.P. 1901; *The Dioscuri in Christian Legend*, C.U.P. 1903.

tion of the more recondite studies of the occult, folklore and mythology, and possibly the popular songs, is within the grasp of an educated man. It is not Joyce's fault if allusions to Homer or to the Old Testament are today liable to be missed even by graduates of Honours Schools of English. Progressively to understand the meaning of the book is to become familiar with many of the fundamentals of our civilization, its mythology and literature: to know *Finnegans Wake* is a liberal education. And to read it is to train one's ear, since it is impossible to understand much of it without reading aloud.

To show that it is possible to understand a great deal of the book, I shall give a detailed analysis of a passage from Book II, chapter 2, pp. 359-60.

We are now diffusing among our lovers of this sequence (to you! to you!) the dewfolded song of the naughtingels (Alys! Alys! Alys!) from their sheltered positions, in roscenery hay-dyng, on the heather side of waldalure, Mount Saint John's, Jinnyland, whither our allies winged by duskfoil from Moore-parque, swift sanctuary seeking, after Sunsink gang (Oiboe! Hitherzither! Almost dotty! I must dash!) to pour their peace in partial (fioflo floreflorence), sweetishsad lightandgayle, twittwin twosingwoolow. Let everie sound of a pitch keep still in resonance, jemcrow, jackdaw, prime and secund with their terce that whoe betwides them, now full theorbe, now dulcifair, and when we press of pedal (sof!) pick out and vowelize your name. A mum. You pere Golazy, you mere Bare and you Bill Heeny, and you Smirky Dainty and, more beethoken, you wheckfoolthenairyans with all your badchthumpered peanas! We are gluckglucky in our being so far fortunate that, bark and bay duol with Man Goodfox inchimings having ceased to the moment, so allow the clinkars of our nocturnefield, night's sweetmoztheart, their Carmen Sylvae, my quest, my queen. Lou must wail to cool me airly! Coil me curly, warbler dear! May song it flourish (in the underwood), in chorush, long make it flourish (in the Nut, in the Nutsky) till thorush! Secret Hookup.

The literal situation is as follows. In this chapter, H. C. Earwicker dreams that he is in his tavern, serving drinks to his hostile customers, who are the jury trying him for his real and imaginary crimes. To escape from his hunters (for he is throughout an old fox), he transforms himself into a B.B.C. announcer introducing a live broadcast of the nightingales' song from a secret place ('Secret Hookup'), and later into the nightingales themselves. The main technique in this chapter is that of the radio broadcast: we have already been given a

weather forecast and news bulletin, a television comic act and a racing commentary. Here we have the dance music which used to be relayed in the 1920's and 30's, in the middle of which the song of the nightingales was put on the air, sometimes induced by the music of a 'cello. Unfortunately for H. C. E., the announcer and nightingales merely repeat once again the painful old story of his encounter with the two temptresses in the Phoenix Park, when he seems to have acted as a Peeping Tom; and this encounter is in turn a symbol of the incest theme, introducing his daughter Isabel and her 'double' ('his twy Isas', on the next page) in various disguises. The customer-jurymen are not deceived, and recognize H. C. E.'s voice: 'We knows his ventruquulence' (truculent ventriloquist's eloquence). On a higher level of symbolism, the nightingale is the symbol of immortality and thus reinforces the resurrection myth which is the basic theme of *Finnegans Wake*. There are here many references to the Elysian Fields, particularly at the end of the passage, which is drawn from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*.

The quotation most obviously relevant to the situation is from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (a play which is naturally a fertile source of cross-references¹). Nick Bottom before he is translated, talks of disguising his voice: 'I will roar you as 'twere any nightingale'. As is typical of Joyce, this quotation is not given; but the passage contains other references to the play. 'Let everie sound of a pitch keep still' ('Come, sit down, every mother's son and rehearse your parts'. M.N.D. III, i); 'pick out and vowelize your name . . . You pere Golazy' ('Read the names of the actors . . . You, Nick Bottom', I, ii; and the stumbling over the names is similar). Finally, since the passage is about music, Joyce puns on the names of many musicians.

So much for the general situation; what follows is an attempt to explain some of the details. *Diffusing*: Radio-Diffusion, and the diffusing of H. C. E.'s personality. *Sequence*: pursuit. *To you!*: the nightingales' 'Tereu'. *Dewfolded*: twofold, the two Temptresses, naughty girls, whose names follow. One of them is Lewis Carroll's Alice, used throughout as a symbol of an old man's love. *Rose-scenery*: Rossini. *Haydyng*: Haydn, hiding. *Heather*: other, hither. *Waldature*: Valhalla, alluring grove and Waterloo. *Saint John's* (Wood), where Keats listened to the nightingale. *Jinnyland*: The Two are 'jinnies' in chapter 1, which introduced the Waterloo theme and the soldiers; also Jenny Lind, the Swedish nightingale. *Allies*: Alice, and the three soldiers who discover H. C. E.'s misdemeanour in the park. *Duskfoil*: fall, feuille. *Mooreparque, swift*: Moor Park, where Swift met Stella, the first of his two women, and sought sanctuary; also the call of an Australian bird 'more pork'. *Sunsink*:

¹ Compare p. 93 'for like your true venuson Esau he was dovetimid as the dears at Bottoime'.

sunset, Dunsink observatory, the Irish Greenwich. *Gang*: gun. *Oiboe*: oboe, Oh boy! At this point there is interference on the air, from the Morse code voices of the Two: *dotty, dash. Floflo flore-florence*: H. C. E. has a characteristic stammer which betrays him; Florence Nightingale. *Sweetishsad*: Swedish, sweet and sad. *Light-andgayle*: the bird; light and gay; night and day. In a series of opposite pairs we have the theme of the conflicting twins (*twittwin*), Shem and Shaun. At this point an owl's 'tu-wit tu-woo' interrupts the broadcast (as it often did), and the angry announcer tells the son of a bitch to keep quiet. *Twosingwoolow*: also tit-willow, and 'to sing low to you'. Other birds of the air join in counterpoint, singing mass at the canonical hours of Prime and Terce. *Terce*: also 'tercel' and the three soldiers, who are Shem, Shaun and apparently Ear-wicker's double *jemcrow, jackdaw*: Shem and Shaun. *Whoe betwides*: woe betide, between. *Full theorbe, now dulcifair*: 'Full the orb, now dulcet fair'; filthy, fair; theorbo and dulcimer. *Pick out*: crows pick out eyes (vowelize). *Pedal*: soft and loud (*in resonance*). Quince now calls the actors' names (musicians). *Pere Golazy*: Pergolesi, and also Balzac's Père Goriot who had two troublesome daughters. *Mere Bare*: Meyerbeer, a mere bear. *Bill Heeny*: Bellini. *Smirky Dainty*: Mercadante. *Beethoken*: Beethoven, betoken. *Wheckfoolthe-nairyans*: ?Wagnerians. *Badchthumpered peanas*: Bach's Well-tempered Clavicord, paeans; also introducing the *chthonic*, Under-world theme. *Gluckglucky*: stammer, Gluck's Elysian Fields. *Bark and Bay*: dark and day, the hounds barking at the fox (H. C. E.'s pursuit). *Man Goodfox*: 'Goodman Fox' is a frequent theme in the book, here assimilated to the 1930's jazz of Roy Fox and Benny Goodman. *Clinkars*: the birds' song, but also the rattling of the tramway cars at night, cf. *Carmen*. *Nocturnefield*: John Field, Irish composer of nocturnes, and Elysian fields. *Carmen Sylvae*: song of the woods; pen-name of Queen Elizabeth of Rumania; the opera. *My quest, my queen*: the aria, 'O questa quella'. *Sweetmoztheart*: Mozart, and the dance number 'Goodnight sweetheart'. *Cool me airly*: 'You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear ... For I'm to be Queen o' the May'. *Coil me curly*, as the early worm said to the bird. The end of the passage is based on prayers from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. *Secret Hookup*: Sekhet-Hetep, the Fields of Peace or Elysian Fields, which included the Field of Reeds. Hence *chorush, thorush* which apart from a chorus of thrushes contain 'rushes' and the god Horus. *Nut* is the sky goddess; *underwood* suggests underworld. These references to the *Book of the Dead* bring together the themes of Judgment and Resurrection.

I cannot claim to have traced all the references or explained all the deformations of words in this passage, and I have probably missed puns which will strike some readers as obvious. But I hope I

have exposed enough to show that the paragraph is a shimmering web of associations, the main strands of which are bird-song, music and immortality, and that the major themes of the book are sounded in it. Indeed, almost every paragraph is a microcosm of the whole: 'When a part so ptee does duty for the holos we soon grow to use of an allforabit' (pp. 18-9). A detailed analysis also shows that Joyce's references are not all highly learned or peculiarly local: one of a reader's best qualifications is a grasp of recent popular culture, such as the press, advertisements, the B.B.C., and of course low jokes.

The kind of oblique Shakespearean quotation which is analysed above is fairly common throughout the book. Mr L. A. G. Strong has traced a number of references to Shakespeare, but he has not always pointed out how they are used. There is another indirect quotation on p. 256, towards the end of Book II, chapter 2, 'The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies'.

Home all go. Halome. Blare no more ramsblares, oddmund barks! And cease your fumings, kindalled bushies! And sherrigoldies yeassymgnays; you wileshaweshowe moves swiftly sterneward! For here the holy language. Soons to come. To pause.

The situation is that the children have come to the end of the play they have been acting, which is also a guessing-game. The thunder of the All-Father frightens the children, just as, according to Vico, it frightened the first men into a sense of the divine. The key quotation, unspoken, is from *Cymbeline* (IV, ii):

*Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;*

and the more familiar first stanza gives the sense

*Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.*

The theme, then, is death and fear of death; the thought of

*what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.*

Two words are enough to bring in Hamlet's soliloquy, after a Dance Macabre of actors (the Kembles and Kendals) and of Irish

orators and dramatists (Burke, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Yeats, Synge, Wilde, Shaw), and the Leitmotiv of Swift and Sterne. To imitate the psychology of a dream, in which the most painful issues may be the most heavily disguised, Joyce, as Mr Levin has noted, becomes most recondite when he is most serious. Although he was a fellow of infinite jest, Joyce's main intention was serious enough, and we shall miss his meaning if we treat the book as an elaborate practical joke.

It may be felt that I have not yet dealt with an even greater difficulty in the interpretation of *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce notoriously makes a large number of references to the topography, architecture and history of Dublin. His hero is among other things the City itself, and Dublin is the microcosm of all the cities of the world, from the cities of the Plain to the Irish colony of New York. And Joyce believed Dublin to be a Phoenix among cities, a village where everyone knew everyone else's business: 'the expression "Dubliner" seems to me to bear some meaning and I don't know whether the same can be said for such words as "Londoner" or "Parisian"' (Gorman, *James Joyce*, p. 146). The city was the main theme of his early book of short stories and at least the secondary theme of *Ulysses*, but in *Finnegans Wake* it is celebrated with even greater piety, nowhere more feelingly than at the end of Book III, chapter 3 (p. 532 ff., a passage published separately as *Haveth Childers Everywhere*). This eloquent hymn on the growth of the city and his marriage to the river is shot through with the place-names and personalities of a thousand years. Now, it is certain that a non-Dubliner must miss a good deal, but with patience he can decipher some of this. I have found the most useful keys to be *Dubliners*, the *Portrait*, and *Ulysses* themselves, *Muirhead's Ireland* (in the 'Blue Guides' series), Gorman's biography, and more recently, Mr Maurice Craig's charming and learned *Dublin 1660-1860: a social and architectural history* (Cresset Press 1952), which contains an excellent street directory and index. A little topographical knowledge from such sources will help the decoding of a sentence like this:

Mr Answers: Brimgem young, bringem young, bringem young!: in my bethel of Solyman's I accouched their rotundities and I turnkeyed most insultantly over raped lutetias in the lock:

The City has been describing how he dealt with the 'women question', and the sequence of ideas runs: Brigham Young, Mormons, Brummagen, bethel, house, Bethel hospital and Rotunda maternity hospital in Dublin, Solomon, accoucheur, rotundity, the notorious eighteenth century turnkeys in Dublin, insulting, sultan, over-ripe, Rape of Lucrecia, Lutetia (Paris), Rape of the Lock, dock.

A guide-book is indeed essential for the understanding of *Finnegans Wake* because the guide-book approach to history is the dominant Irish approach and this Joyce both parodies and exhibits himself. Parodies are to be found near the beginning and end:

Hence when the clouds roll by, jamey, a proudseye view is enjoyable of our mounding's mass, now Wallinstone national museum, with, in some greenish distance, the charming water-loose country and the two quitewhite villagettes who hear show of themselves so gigglesome minxt the follyages, the prettities! ... This way to the museyroom. (p. 7-8)

We seem to understand apad vellumtomes muniment. . . . (p. 595)

But there is more to be seen than parody. Many of the chief characters of the book, St Patrick, Brian Boru, Strongbow, Grace O'Malley, Swift, O'Connell, Parnell, exist in Joyce's pages on much the same plane as they do in the Blue Guide: that is, as mythological characters repeating a few memorable words and actions for all eternity. No attempt is made to understand them as people or to consider their actual historical situation. In Ireland, where all political arguments go back to the Formorians and the Tuatha De Danann, everything is history, yet true history hardly exists. In fact the history of Ireland cannot now be written, thanks to the burning of the Public Record Office ('the reducing of records to ashes', F. W. p. 189) — a more than symbolical act which made certain that most of the past would remain in the realms of legend. This myth-making habit has been the curse of scholarship, as Professor Macalister says with venom: 'Even yet, the pagan origins of the Round Towers; St Patrick's homiletic use of the shamrock; St Kevin's assassination of his admirer (who is dubbed with the entirely modern and essentially un-Irish name "Kathleen")'; the existence in various places of symbolic groups of "seven churches" . . . Even yet, Dublin residents call Speaker Connolly's shooting lodge in the mountains "The Hell-fire Club". Even yet, the *Irish melodies* of Moore are accepted as authorities.' But all this is a fertile source of poetic imagery; and each item on Professor Macalister's list is to be found in the pages of *Finnegans Wake*.

This attitude to history destroys the sense of time. When Yeats asks if Cuchullain stood beside Pearse and Connolly in the Post Office during Easter 1916, the question is purely rhetorical: of course he did. Cuchullain and Connolly are contemporaries and in the same situation; all the great figures exist outside of time and are historical only in the sense that they have become fit subjects for legend and anecdote. Irish history, in the sense of that which pro-

¹ *Ancient Ireland*, 1935, p. ix.

vides interesting subjects for gossip, virtually came to an end in 1921, when the Troubles ceased. In the next year Joyce began to write his book, the ultimate in Irish historiography: in his dream world all history is truly simultaneous.

It is not hard to see how this view of history can shade into a cyclical theory based on Vico or Spengler. If all the heroes are contemporary, then nothing ever changes: if anything seems to change, as it must do, this can be explained by reference to the turning of Providence's wheel. Exactly the same point will be reached again in a new cycle; then the same dead heroes will rise again (the Finnegans awaken) and will be reborn in new shapes. Parnell will return again, in popular belief, just as King Arthur will, and in a sense Parnell is himself Arthur. Joyce's theories, drawn from Vico, Frazer and the esoteric doctrines of metempsychosis, like Yeats's similar theories, merely give a sophisticated frame to a traditionally Irish outlook.

Another aspect of Joyce's thought can be illustrated from Mr Craig's book on Dublin. The Irish view of history, is it confers vividness on past figures, also reduces everyone to the same level of unreality: it is hard to say if Pearse and Connolly are now more real than Cuchullain. Dublin architecture alone is relatively real and permanent (except when bits of it are blown up), while people flit through the buildings like ghosts. Such is the impression I receive from books like Mr Craig's. He treats Dublin architecture with respect, using both sensibility and scholarship to make you feel that it is solid, but exhibits the usual attitude towards the wraiths of history. He professes to despise political history, refusing to take all the national mythology seriously, but the 'social history' which he substitutes consists of little more than entertaining anecdotes about the lesser figures of the pantheon. He thus makes available for us a mass of gossip about the eighteenth century, of the kind that Joyce delighted in, such as the story of the supposed Turkish Dr Achmet Borumborad, from Jonah Barrington's *Sketches* (F. W. p. 492, Craig p. 271). Craig's Dublin, though its features are precisely described, remains Joyce's Dublin, 'A phantom city, phaked of philim pholk'.

It must be said that there is a certain amount of true history in Joyce. He mocks the traditional account of a perennial struggle of the native Celt against the Nordic invader, of Gael against Gall, and presents a picture more in line with modern archaeology. His view is that the enemy invader has contributed everything to Irish history and is always absorbed into the island's culture. Another sentence from Professor Macalister might be taken as a motto for *Finnegans Wake* (it is also relevant to Mr Bloom's plight): 'It has ever been the fate of Ireland to be the cockpit of two opposing

peoples, which, after they have come together and fused into one, presently find themselves obliged to meet a fresh opponent. Halberd-Pict and Sword-Celt; Picto-Celt and Iron-Teuton; Picto-Celt-Teuton and Scandinavian; Picto-Celt-Teuton-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman; Picto-Celt-Teuton-Scandinavian-Norman and Tudor or Stuart English colonist'; (and in future) 'Picto-Celt-Teuton-Scandinavian-English and Hebrew'.¹ So in *Finnegans Wake* the endlessly repeated conflict-and-reconciliation of invader and defender, symbolized by the warring twins, who unite after their struggle to produce a higher synthesis:

Mearmerge two races, swete and brack. Morthering rue.
Hither, craching eastuards, they are in surgence: hence cool at
ebb, they requiesce. (p. 17)

CHUFF . . ., the fine frank fairhaired fellow of the fairy-
tales, who wrestles for tophole with the bold bad bleak boy
Glugg, geminally . . ., until they adumbrace a pattern of some-
body else or other. (p. 220)

Joyce, rejecting the claims of the Celticists, sees Dublin as a primarily Danish and secondarily English city: hence the high frequency of Norse words, symbolizing the change in language caused by invasions; and hence the emphasis on English history (such as the Crimean War in Book II, 3 and the growth of Imperialism in III, 3) with which he saw Irish history to be inseparably bound.

More difficult than Joyce's local references, in my opinion, are his dealings with the occult. The peculiarly Irish view of history led him, as we have seen, not only to Vico but to theories about transmigration. If H. C. Earwicker is every hero, it is because every hero is reborn in him. This esoteric doctrine was already implied in *Ulysses*, as Mr Stuart Gilbert has shown in his well-known study.² On first sight the adventures of Mr Bloom and Stephen Dedalus seem to be comic parallels to corresponding episodes in the *Odyssey* — the barmaids to the Sirens, the Citizen to the Cyclops, Gerty MacDowell to Nausicaa — and the intention to be mock-heroic. But on further reading it turns out that Joyce's purpose is not to satirize the trivial and undignified present by reference to the heroic past, but to show the real identity of Everyman-Bloom with Odysseus and of the other characters with their archetypes. There are still deeper layers of allegory: Bloom is a 'type' of Christ, in the medieval sense, and the drink of cocoa Stephen shares with him is the sacrament. Joyce intends no blasphemy, but is saying that the mysteries of religion no less than the heroic legends are 'figured' in the events of modern everyday life: Gods and heroes are reborn every day in man's image. Some of this is made clear in the text through Stephen

¹ Op. cit., p. 12.

² *James Joyce's Ulysses*, 1930, new edition 1952.

Dedalus's abstruse meditations on the transmigration of souls, which correspond to Molly Bloom's puzzlement over 'met-him-pike-hoses'. Joyce's technique for synthesizing all history and all religion was already well developed at this apparently naturalistic stage. Mr Gilbert has commented fully on this aspect of *Ulysses*, with ample quotations from such works as Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* and A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*, which Joyce, like Yeats's circle, had studied.

Not only is the theory of transmigration greatly expanded in *Finnegans Wake*, but it has become only one of many varieties of occultism. References to Rosicrucians, alchemists and cabalists abound, especially in Book II, chapter 3, which tells the story of the creation. The explanation of a sentence on page 263, 'The tasks above are as the flasks below, saith the emerald canticule of Hermes' is given by Mr Gilbert, op. cit., p. 55, quoting the Smaragdine Table of Hermes Trismegistus, 'that which is above is as that which is below'. This material must lie outside the knowledge of most readers, who tend to be repelled by the sordid and monotonous tone of most 'official' esoteric literature. It can only be hoped that some expert will complete the revelation of arcana begun by the authors of the *Skeleton Key* and by Mr Gilbert.

It is, however, important from a critical point of view to see that occultism has affected not only Joyce's thought but his whole practice of writing. It will not do to say with Professors Levin and Tindall that Joyce 'had no beliefs' or that he only uses the mysteries to make fun of them. Of course he is ribald at the expense of the occult, but priests themselves make theological jokes. The relation of 'belief' to literature is not a simple one. We cannot know how far Joyce would have given his full intellectual support to the propositions of occultism, but that is not the only meaning of 'belief'. It is certain that Joyce, like Yeats, spent years in studying the subject; and his literary practice shows that he considered occultism a suitable framework for his most serious literary conceptions, as Yeats did. In fact, Joyce went even further than Yeats, who was perfectly serious about the whole thing. If Yeats based his 'symboliste' poetic partly on occultist symbolism, in Joyce it is a matter not only of imagery, allegory and archetypes, but of his basic verbal technique, the method of identifying two or more levels of meaning by means of the pun. Joyce's verbalism is the ultimate point of the occultist theory of language. *Finnegans Wake* shows a strange kinship to various forms of esoteric writing, which in turn are related to a kind of mania. I do not mean by this that Joyce was insane, or that all occultists are necessarily insane, nor am I trying to pass a hostile critical judgment. But Joyce's work should be seen as related to a strong minority trend in our culture.

To illustrate the kind of insanity to which *Finnegans Wake* seems analogous, I quote from Kimball Young's *Handbook of Social Psychology* (1946), p. 172, where pathological forms of fantasy, especially 'verbalisms' are discussed. 'One patient maintained that he was God because his name was William. To prove this he divided his name as WILL-I-AM, which he associated with the "direct will of God" and with the notion of "I am", an idea common in our culture with respect to the divine power. Another, who identified himself with Napoleon, said he was this historical figure because his name was Buonaparte, that is, born apart. This is a good instance of the clang or sound associations often found in schizoid fantasies.' Young describes the case of 'Queen Anna', as the patient called herself, to illustrate 'a form of paranoid schizophrenia which, had it been slightly less violent, might have passed unnoticed, or might have provided the basis for a new religious cult . . . She gradually developed a delusion that she was the bridal queen, a fourth member of the godhead', and Young quotes from her voluminous prophetic poetry. 'In general her systematic delusions did not change much over the years. New details were added, however, especially if any event involved the numeral four, which she considered a sacred number in her scheme . . . At one time she also worked out some fantastic associations with the number twelve and linked this to her concern for freemasonry' (writing for example), ' . . . 12 is the foundation number, 12 signs of the Zodiac, to rule the Heavens, 12 months in the year, 12 Covenant Sons of Jacob, Israel and twelve tribes of the Children of Jacob . . . ' and so on. This kind of numerology, with its emphasis on the number four and its prophetic setting, will be familiar to readers of Blake, Jung and Joyce. Young goes on to discuss 'culturized forms of fantasy', that is systematized fantasies which are accepted by groups of people. He takes some of the cults which are on the border line between normality and pathology: e.g. a small American sun-cult based on the pun, 'The Son of God is the Sun of God', numerical calculations based on the Book of Daniel to give the date of the world's end, proofs that '666' of Revelations refers to the Pope or the Kaiser. It is easy to add to these examples writings like the British Israelites', parts of *The White Goddess*, or Harold Bayley's *The Lost Language of Symbolism*. In all these the same mechanisms obtain: the attempt to prove that everything is symbolic of one comprehensive Whole, the allegorizing of almost anything in terms of almost anything else, the proving of identities by means of puns, false etymology, the gross over-symbolization of objects with emotive associations and above all of numbers. Harold Bayley, anxious to prove that nearly all words, letters and objects are but symbols of the One Divine Fire, goes to fantastic lengths. He writes about horses ('G G's') and Lud or 'the Mighty Mind' (op.

cit. II, 57): 'It is customary for English judges to be addressed in court as "M'Lud"', and it may be that LUD was originally a generic term for *judge*. The French for *judge* is *juge*, the same as the English *geegee*; and a synonym for the word *judgement* is *doom*. In Teutonic *dom* meant *law*, and neither *dom* nor *doom* differ from *dome*. At the recent Durbar in India King GEORGE and Queen MARY were seated under a golden dome, the symbol of *d'ome*, the Resplendent Sun, of Dominion, and of *Dominus*, the Lord . . .' There is no limit to this fallacious kind of punning, which does not even offer the excuse of wit. Here Bayley's fantasies are purely private, but elsewhere he gives an interesting account of 'culturized' uses of allegory and symbol by Gnostics and their followers. Philosophical alchemists, magicians and theosophists have used much the same techniques. There is a dreary sameness about the occultist tradition, which for centuries has given the sanction of precedents to small groups of eccentrics who feel compelled to indulge their associative mania. Yet, boring as the official literature may be, the doctrine sometimes appears in literature with surprising and beautiful results. Sir Thomas Browne's speculations on the quincunx are related to numerology, Smart's *Song to David* is apparently based on Freemasonry, Nerval's obscure sonnets have been explained by reference to the mythological alchemists. According to Miss Enid Starkie, Rimbaud owed almost as much to books on white magic as Blake did to the Cabalist tradition, according to M. Saurat. If Joyce's final place in literature is to be with such writers as these and not with the great novelists, that will not be altogether to his discredit.

Nor should the gap between this minority tradition and the main stream of Western culture be considered as absolute. Orthodox religious systems have always given a certain sanction to free play with mystical symbols and numbers. When Dante writes in the *Vita Nuova*, as the authors of the *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* remind us, that 'Beatrice is a Nine, because the root of nine is three, and the root of Beatrice is the Trinity', and analyses the syllables of her name, he is exhibiting neither schizophrenia nor occultism, but using an accepted mystical pattern as a framework for his art. Platonism has been a semi-official philosophy under Christianity, and it has encouraged in literature the search for allegories, for 'correspondencies' between microcosm and macrocosm, and for 'signatures of all things I am here to read', as Stephen says in *Ulysses*. Our literature, from medieval allegory through Metaphysical poetry to Romanticism, is always being permeated with ideas bearing an affinity to occult doctrine. To reject this aspect of Joyce outright is to reject part of the accepted traditions of literature.

This essay is intended, as I have said, to be an approach to the interpretation of *Finnegans Wake*, and not a critical survey. When

such a survey comes to be written, it will probably stress quite different aspects of the book: Joyce's realistic understanding of states of feeling, his evocation of the pathos of childhood at the beginning of Book II, his compassionate picture of approaching old age at the end of Book IV. The fantastic structure of mythology may be admitted to have a firm base in psychological realism, and *Finnegans Wake*, like *Ulysses*, may take its place among the great comedies of urban life. But that is to anticipate.

PIQUE-LA-LUNE: ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

PETER GREEN

*L'homme qui moissonnait au ciel ce qu'il donnait ensuite à la terre
prisonnière.*

1

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY is that curious paradox: a prophet without honour except in his own country. In England three of his best works have been translated by Lewis de la Galantière, yet have aroused little attention; in America he was lionized for the two years he spent there during the war, but the fame thus acquired suffered the usual fate of a nine days' wonder. Only in France, where a spate of critical writing on his work and life has already been produced, is there any appreciation of his true stature. Why this should be so it is difficult to understand: for Saint-Exupéry was in several ways one of the greatest men of his generation. Born in 1900, he grew up in the uneasy generation of *les ans entre deux guerres*, yet never joined the ranks of those whom Spender called 'the generation of Hamlets who found the world out of joint and did not know how to set it right'. He allied in an unparalleled degree the positive decisiveness of the born aviator with the philosopher's patient self-questioning and the poet's moment of vision. He wrote seven books which are not only the greatest memorial extant of man's conquest of the air, but build up a deep and sensitive philosophy of life. He has been, inevitably, compared to T. E. Lawrence: but the comparison is a superficial one, for his conception of life was strongly humanitarian, and he did not suffer from that neurotic self-effacing exhibitionism which marred so much of Lawrence's greatness. He has been called 'le Joseph Conrad de l'air'; but though he borrowed some literary devices from Conrad, he went far further in his discovery of his chosen element. He was himself the perfect example of the *homme complet*, the *homme de métier*, who, in contradistinction to the specialist or *homme collectif* is the ideal underlying his conception of life.

Saint-Exupéry spent his childhood at Saint-Maurice-de-Remens, between Lyons and Ambérieu. Even at this age one can see in him that duality of mind which to him was a natural unity: his sister Simone recounts how, besides waking the family up in the middle of the night to read them poetry, he bored them with lectures on the internal combustion engine:

— Regarde, Monot, ça c'est un moteur d'aéroplane. Je vais t'expliquer.

— Non, ça m'ennuie.

— Ça ne fait rien. Écoute tout de même. Ça c'est un piston. Ça c'est une bielle. Ça . . . Mais regarde!

— Non, c'est assommant.

— Oh! Je t'en prie. Tu n'es pas gentille.

He was educated at the Jesuit college of Notre Dame de Saint Croix at Le Mans, and later at the Collège de St.-Jean at Fribourg: working hard at what interested him (at this stage Latin and essay-writing) and ignoring what did not. While at school he earned, by reason of his round face, snub nose, and protuberant eyes, the oddly prophetic nickname of Pique-la-lune, which irresistibly recalls that other and greater philosopher whom in ways he so closely resembled. From Fribourg he passed to the École Bossuet to prepare for the entrance examination to the Navy. Here a change of interest showed itself: for while he attained top marks in mathematics (a subject to which he was to return later in life, and exemplified by his solution of the 'Problème du Pharaon'¹) he came low in the essay and failed the oral completely. After a variety of odd jobs he began, in 1921, his period of conscript service in the Air Force, at first on the ground. Saint-Exupéry's reaction to this was typical: he obtained an hour's flying training from a civilian pilot, and then took off and landed by himself — without mishap. A few days later he qualified as a civil pilot, and afterwards as a Service one: and divided his Air Force career between Morocco and Le Bourget, where he suffered the first of his many crashes.

After his release in 1923 Saint-Exupéry spent two fruitless and unhappy years in business appointments. These, however, gave him the leisure to write: and in 1925 Jean Prévost published an article on flying of his in *Navire d'Argent*. But in 1926 came the opportunity which was to change the whole course of his life. On the recommendation of the Abbé Sudour he was taken on the staff of L'Aéropostale, then under the charge of the formidable Didier-Daurat, to fly airmail between Toulouse and Dakar: an experience which later provided material for his greatest work, *Terre des Hommes*. Didier-Daurat must have approved of him, for a few months later Saint-Exupéry was transferred to Cap Juby, between Dakar and Casablanca, and promoted *chef de poste*. During the eighteen months he spent here he wrote his first book, *Courrier Sud*, which was published by Gallimard in Paris in 1929.

¹ *Confluences*, no. 12-4, pp. 89-92.

2

Courrier Sud is the nearest approach to a novel that Saint-Exupéry ever made. The choice was a logical one: the terrifyingly personal conflict of passion and the sense of *métier* — personal vocation harmonized with all one's fellow men, to which Saint-Exupéry was to return again and again, needed the personal self-effacement of the novelist to attain any degree of objectivity.

The novel is constructed in a way that immediately suggests a cinematic technique. The basic scene is the Cap Juby calling station where 'le Sahara se déliait dune par dune sous la lune', and the staff are anxiously awaiting news of an overdue mailplane. From here we move to the pilot, Jacques Bernis, returned from 'étranges vacances' in Paris, which have left him with 'ce tumulte de coeur qui n'avait plus de sens', and the nature of which we have yet to learn. In his long soliloquy on his career Saint-Exupéry traces 'non la démarche matérielle de Bernis mais le climat de son être moral après la rupture d'équilibre d'un désordre passionnel',¹ and returns, as in later works, to memories of childhood, to the

Condition of complete simplicity
Costing not less than everything

which seemed to him, as to Wordsworth and so many others, the only chance to recover that wholeness of vision without which man is lost in the false dogmas of his own making. It is the first step in that process of integration by which Bernis, in these few short hours before his death, abandons his Protagorean position at the centre of his universe, and recognizes that only through his *métier* can he realize himself; only by accepting the concept of Man can he attain either true individuality or kinship with his fellowmen. And here we can note the first appearance of that adaptation of the Platonic theory of Ideas which Saint-Exupéry was to develop in his two succeeding books. Philosophically he was the best kind of eclectic, deriving his thought from such disparate sources as Plato and Nietzsche, but discarding the elements of inhuman dogmatism in the one and superhuman egoism in the other. In general his literary debt to Greece, in particular to Homer and the tragedians, is great, and has not been fully recognized.

The central episode of the book is Bernis's *affaire* with Geneviève (a character who bears much resemblance to the Yvonne de Galais of *Grand Meaulnes*) which takes place during his earlier leave in Paris, and is designed to expose and resolve the eternal conflict between man's love and his aspirations. We are made aware of the gulf between the two ways of life when Bernis first goes to Paris:

¹ DANIEL ANET, *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*, p. 68.

Il entre, pesant, dans un dancing, garde, parmi les gigolos, son manteau comme un vêtement d'explorateur. Ils vivent leur nuit dans cette enceinte comme des goujons dans un aquarium . . . Bernis dans ce milieu flou, ou seul il garde sa raison, se sent lourd comme un portefaix, pèse droit sur ses jambes.

And yet in the end it is Geneviève who resolves his conflict: only through her love can he follow the path he must. It is the Plato of the *Symposium* rather than the *Phaedo* we seem to hear when he writes:

Pourquoi, pour la première fois, je ne découvre pas de source et me sens si loin du trésor? Quelle est cette promesse obscure que l'on m'a faite et qu'un dieu obscur ne tient pas? . . . J'ai retrouvé la source. T'en souviens-tu? C'est Geneviève . . . C'est elle qu'il me fallait pour me reposer du voyage . . . Je l'ai retrouvé comme on retrouve le sens des choses et je marche à son côté dans un monde dont je découvre enfin l'intérieur. . . .

In no other book does Saint-Exupéry state this theme so clearly. And yet Bernis must die: and the final moral is conveyed by the last of the vividly dramatic radio messages by which his death, as if in a Greek tragedy, is felt rather than seen: ' . . . Pilote tué avion brisé courrier intact Stop. Continue sur Dakar.'

Lastly, it is in *Courrier Sud* that we first find Saint-Exupéry the scientist in revolt against scientific determinism, against knowledge barren of wisdom and action that can mean nothing without significance: the concept which reveals that it takes more than death to make a tragedy, that (as we find in *Pilote de Guerre*) 'il faut que la signification de la mort équilibre la mort'. Bernis, in mental torment, is standing in Notre Dame: and the words of the priest come to him as the words of Christ Himself:

Ô prisonniers comprenez-moi! Je vous délivre de votre science, de vos formules, de vos lois, de cet esclavage de l'esprit, de ce déterminisme plus dur que la fatalité. Je suis le défaut dans l'armure. Je suis la lucarne dans la prison. Je suis l'erreur dans le calcul: je suis la vie.

Vous avez intégré la marche de l'étoile, ô génération des laboratoires, et vous ne la connaissez plus. C'est un signe dans votre livre, mais ce n'est plus de la lumière: vous en savez moins qu'un petit enfant. Vous avez découvert jusqu'aux lois qui gouvernent l'amour humain, mais cet amour même échappe à vos signes: vous en savez moins qu'une jeune fille . . . Venez à moi, vous à qui l'action, qui ne mène à rien, fut amère. Venez à moi, vous à qui la pensée qui ne mène qu'aux lois fut amère. . . .

3

In 1929 Didier-Daurat sent Saint-Exupéry to Buenos Aires as Director of Aeroposta Argentina. With him went his friends Mermoz, Guillaumet, and Reine; and they established a route, over perhaps the worst flying terrain in the world, down the Patagonian coast to Punta Arenas. In 1931, on the reorganization of the company, Saint-Exupéry returned to Paris with the manuscript of *Vol de Nuit*, which was awarded the Prix Fémina during the same year.

In *Vol de Nuit* Saint-Exupéry devoted an entire book to the epic theme of man's struggle to conquer a new element; and for many it will be the unique record of this pioneering triumph, with its inimitable Conradesque descriptions of hurricanes and cyclones fought and overcome, that constitute Saint-Exupéry's true claim to survival. But the philosophy is indissolubly bound up with the events related: Fabien lost over the Andes, grimly fighting the storm, is both cause and symbol of Saint-Exupéry's fundamental attitude to life: the passionate concern that constantly searches for the true nature and dignity of man; his infinite care for human relations; and above all his feeling of *responsibility* to his fellows, that blend of solidarity and *noblesse oblige* which leads him to try to know them, to awaken them, and draw them with him to that height of sacrifice and knowledge of vocation which is for him the true measure of man. André Gide wrote of this book: 'Il y a pour l'aviation, comme pour l'exploration des terres inconnues, une première période héroïque, et *Vol de Nuit*, qui nous peint la tragique aventure d'un de ces pionniers de l'air, prend tout naturellement un ton d'épopée . . . Le héros de *Vol de Nuit*, non déshumanisé certes, s'élève à une vertu surhumaine. Je crois que ce qui me plaît surtout dans ce récit frémissant, c'est sa noblesse. Les faiblesses, les abandons, les déchéances de l'homme, nous les connaissons de reste et la littérature de nos jours n'est que trop habile à les dénoncer; mais ce surpassement de soi qu'obtient la volonté tendue, c'est là ce que nous avons surtout besoin qu'on nous montre.'

As the *Iliad* portrays the whole quality of the epic in the tragedy of two men, so does *Vol de Nuit*, and gains immeasurably in strength and significance thereby. But Saint-Exupéry has also learnt from Conrad that the true way to describe a catastrophe is not to pile up physical description so much as to analyse the reactions of those involved, and the effect of the event on their immediate surroundings. 'Conrad ne nous montre du typhon que le drame social.'

The significance underlying the establishment of this South American air route is summed up in the drama of Fabien's fatal flight, where the narrative alternates between the pilot in his plane and Rivière, the head of the company, at the airport in Buenos Aires. *Vol de Nuit* is dedicated to Didier-Daurat, and it is generally assumed

that Rivière was a portrayal of Saint-Exupéry's chief. But Didier Daurat himself is reported as saying¹: 'Je ne suis pas Rivière. On minimise la beauté du personnage en voulant le ramener à un caractère particulière. Rivière se trouvait en chacun de nous.' The truth of this statement is evident in the book. The responsibility is not only Rivière's; nor the hopes, the fears, the strain and eventual triumph: they are shared by every participant in the drama.

Nevertheless, the personality and problems of Rivière tower above everything else in *Vol de Nuit*: he is Saint-Exupéry's greatest character. He is the storm-centre, the source and head of the unceasing struggle: 'Rivière avait conscience d'arracher quelque chose au sort, de réduire la part d'inconnu, et de tirer ses équipages, hors de la nuit, jusqu'au rivage . . . Il était indifférent à Rivière de paraître juste ou injuste . . . l'homme était pour lui une cire vierge qu'il fallait pétrir.' It might be argued that these qualities are no more than are demanded from every officer in wartime: and yet it is doubtful whether the perennial dilemma has ever been stated more compellingly than in this book, which has been compared favourably with de Vigny's *Servitude et Grandeur militaire*. The essential point, however, is that Rivière is not, and must not be, basically inhuman. 'Je n'admire pas,' writes Pascal, 'l'excès d'une vertu, comme de la valeur, si je ne vois en même temps l'excès de la vertu opposée . . . Car autrement, ce n'est pas monter, c'est tomber.' The problem of justice continually oppresses Rivière: 'Suis-je juste ou injuste? Je l'ignore. Si je frappe, les pannes diminuent. Le responsable, ce n'est pas l'homme, c'est comme une puissance obscure que l'on ne touche jamais, si l'on ne touche pas tout le monde . . . Si j'étais très juste, un vol de nuit serait chaque fois un chance de mort.'

The conflict of Bernis and Geneviève is re-stated more strikingly in *Vol de Nuit*. This time it is Fabien's wife — six weeks married — who telephones the airport in her anxiety to inquire about her husband. The two worlds clash violently: 'Rivière ne pouvait qu'écouter, que plaindre cette petite voix, ce chant tellement triste, mais ennemi. Car ni l'action ni le bonheur individuel n'admettent le partage: ils sont en conflit. Cette femme parlait, elle aussi, au nom d'un monde absolu et de ses devoirs et de ses droits . . . Elle exigeait son bien et elle avait raison.' And the terrible cry is forced from Rivière, in the height of his devotion to his beliefs: 'Aimer, aimer seulement, quelle impasse!' For Rivière there is the knowledge, beyond all logical formulation, 'd'un devoir plus grand que celui d'aimer . . . Ce que vous poursuivez en vous-mêmes meurt.' And he falls to thinking of the sun-temples of the Incas, strange memorial to man's urge for some sort of survival: the pitiable moral of Shel-

¹ In *Spectateur*, August 5th, 1947. I owe this reference to F. A. Shuffrey's edition of *Terre des Hommes*, p. xiv.

ley's Ozymandias.' And the political choice, which is also the gravest of moral decisions, rises before him: shall the state be governed by a centrifugal pursuit of purely individual happiness — the false well-being that can only lead to that weak decadence of which 'la fin sera au néant du sable stérile'; or shall we demand the sacrifice, or at least the subordination, of this well-being to man's common task, and base on this conception 'l'expansion ... de toutes les capacités, de toutes les vertus de l'homme, dans le cadre de ce devoir', where comradeship replaces egoism, and forms in the individual the need for solidarity, the 'désir de cette forme parfaite de l'amour qui n'est plus de se regarder l'un l'autre, mais de regarder ensemble le même but'? Thus Rivière integrates the element of love into his world, and sees it — as Bernis did — not as an opposing force, but as the mainspring of his own beliefs. The political problem and the moral problem are one and the same: 'Pour comprendre l'homme et ses besoins, pour le connaître dans ce qu'il a d'essentiel, il ne faut pas opposer l'une à l'autre l'évidence de nos vérités ... A quoi bon discuter les idéologies. Si toutes se démontrent, toutes aussi s'opposent, et de telles discussions font désespérer du salut de l'homme. Alors que l'homme, partout autour de nous, expose les mêmes besoins!'

It is in Fabien's death that Rivière's beliefs find their acid test, and survive. As the radio messages fade and die, he is brought nearly to breaking point: 'Rivière pense qu'un poste radio l'écoute encore. Seule relie entre Fabien au monde une onde musicale, une modulation mineure. Pas une plainte. Pas un cri. Mais le son le plus pur qu'ait jamais formé le désespoir.'¹ Yet in the end the tragedy does not, cannot affect the common task. Fabien is not only swallowed up by the storm, but by the work to which he has devoted his life: and the night flights continue. 'Victoire, défaite, cela n'a point de sens. L'événement en marche compte seul.'

4

Between 1931 and 1938 Saint-Exupéry led a varied life. He narrowly escaped drowning while working as a test pilot; he attempted to break Japy's Paris-Saigon record, and crashed in the Libyan desert; he worked as reporter and correspondent in Russia and Spain for *L'Intransigeant* and *Paris-Soir*. Towards the end of 1937, in attempting a flight from New York to Tierra del Fuego, he crashed in Guatemala, fracturing his skull in five places. Three

¹ It is interesting to note Saint-Exupéry's complete acceptance and integration of scientific apparatus with man's life exemplified in the use of the radio transmitter as a symbol, here as in *Courrier Sud*, linking man with man against the hostile forces of the elements.

months later he returned to France to work on *Terre des Hommes*, which received the Grand Prix de l'Académie for 1938.

In *Terre des Hommes*, besides writing the best descriptive accounts of flying he had yet achieved, Saint-Exupéry recapitulated and reconsidered his whole philosophy of life. The theme, crystallized in the title and approached in his previous books, is stated with terse assurance in the preface: 'La terre nous en apprend plus long sur nous que tous les livres. Parce qu'elle nous résiste. L'homme se découvre quand il se mesure avec l'obstacle. Mais, pour l'atteindre, il lui faut un outil . . .' And for Saint-Exupéry the aeroplane is in the same category as the plough: he has adjusted his attitude to the modern world without ever losing sight of the eternal truths lying behind the development of science. Perhaps he was lucky in the machine he chose, this tool which led him to explore a new element and see more clearly for himself the essential grandeur of man; but if he had not been a pilot, as Gide wisely observed, he would probably have been a miner: and the result would not have been very different.

One passage must serve to illustrate the heights his powers of description, and the inimitable style forged directly from the force of his experiences, reached in this book. It describes Mermoz's encounter with a tornado off the African coast; and affords an obvious, and to my mind favourable comparison with Conrad:

Il vit, en face de lui, se resserrer, de minute en minute, les queues de tornades, comme on voit se bâtir un mur, puis la nuit s'établir sur ces préparatifs, et les dissimuler. Et quand, une heure plus tard, il se faufila sous les nuages, il déboucha dans un royaume fantastique.

Des trombes marines se dressaient la accumulées et en apparence immobiles comme les piliers noirs d'un temple. Elles supportaient, renflées à leurs extrémités, la voûte sombre et basse de la tempête, mais, au travers des déchirures de la voûte, des pans de lumière tombaient, et la pleine lune rayonnait, entre les piliers, sur les dalles froides de la mer. Et Mermoz poursuivait sa route à travers ces ruines inhabitées, obliquant d'un chenal de lumière à l'autre, contournant ces piliers géants où, sans doute, grondait l'ascension de la mer, marchant quatre heures, le long de ces coulées de lune, vers la sortie du temple. Et ce spectacle était si écrasant que Mermoz . . . s'aperçut qu'il n'avait pas eu peur.

In a striking passage of soliloquy, framed in the setting of an old omnibus in which he is riding to Toulouse airport to make his first official flight, Saint-Exupéry considers the relationship of all men to the way of life — not necessarily flying — that he has chosen, and their

basic participation in it. 'We all have some share in the sublime.' In his treatment of the same problem in *Vol de Nuit*, in the person of Robineau, the precise old inspector of aircraft, we can feel some measure of contempt: Robineau the bureaucrat, for whom ideals had hardened into rules, and who saw that his life 'was condemned to greyness'. For the old office worker sitting opposite him in the Toulouse bus he shows an understanding and compassion hitherto denied him: like Donne, he is now truly 'involved in Mankind':

Vieux bureaucrate, mon camarade ici présent, nul jamais ne t'a fait évader et tu n'en es point responsable. Tu as construit ta paix à force d'aveugler de ciment, comme le font les termites, toutes les échappées vers la lumière . . . Tu n'es point l'habitant d'une planète errante, tu ne te poses point de questions sans réponses; tu es un petit bourgeois de Toulouse. Nul ne t'a saisi par les épaules quand il en était temps encore. Maintenant, la glaise dont tu es formé a séché et s'est durcie, et nul en toi ne saurait désormais reveiller le musicien endormi, ou le poète, ou l'astronome qui peut-être t'habitaient d'abord.

And he returns to this point in a beautiful passage at the very end of the book, when, on a long train journey, he finds himself sitting opposite a Polish working couple and their child:

Il était né de ce couple-là une sorte de fruit doré. Il était né de ces lourdes hardes cette réussite de charme et de grace . . . Je me dis: voici un visage de musicien, voici Mozart enfant, voici une belle promesse de la vie . . . On isole la rose, on cultive la rose, ou la favorise. Mais il n'est point de jardinier pour les hommes. Mozart enfant sera marqué comme les autres par la machine à emboutir. Mozart fera ses plus hautes joies de musique pourrie, de la planteur des cafés-concerts. Mozart est condamné.

In Saint-Exupéry's work, and especially in *Terre des Hommes*, there recur repeatedly the poetic images of the desert, the night and the stars, and gold: the latter on almost every page — as, for example, in the quotation immediately above. For Saint-Exupéry the desert is an image neither of sterility nor (perhaps not so different) of asceticism. It is, paradoxically, the place where man can most fully realize his true stature, his essential oneness with his fellows. Under this immense sky, stripped of all clouds, in these vast solitudes, he at last finds physical and spiritual integrity. Yet if the desert leads him to find himself, the unmeasured distances of the stars teach him the complementary lesson of humility: and the gold that flashes from the stars and from so many of Saint-Exupéry's images seems to symbolise that scarcely-to-be-attained ideal that the writer has always

before him: pure, gleaming, incorruptible, the philosopher's stone, the splendour of highest human endeavour. When, after his miraculous rescue in the desert, he wrote his panegyric on water — 'tu n'es pas nécessaire à la vie: tu es la vie' — he might well have added the famous lines:

ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ, ὃ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ
ἅτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μέγανος ἕξοχα πλούτου.¹

But the keynote of *Terre des Hommes* is its conception of heroism, again developed from the episodes of *Courrier Sud* and *Vol de Nuit*, though differing from them in one significant particular. In the earlier books the hero died: in *Terre des Hommes*, on both occasions, though almost miraculously, he survives. Sacrifice is transformed into triumph: man comes into his own. Guillaumet, frostbitten and nearly dead after his terrible struggle through the snow — one of Saint-Exupéry's most graphic descriptions — cries: 'Ce que j'ai fait, je le jure, jamais aucune bête ne l'aurait fait'; and the author says of this: 'Cette phrase, la plus noble que je connaisse, cette phrase qui situe l'homme, qui l'honore, qui rétablit les hiérarchies vraies . . .' And therein lies the whole essence of the victory.

More moving yet is Saint-Exupéry's own escape from the desert, with his mechanic Prévot. The unbelievable perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds, the relentless insistence of the desert that cannot break the courage of these incredible men: the whole passage is a closely-knit triumph of the writer's art indissolubly blended with his own experience. It is unquotable except in its entirety. And in the end the Bedouin tribesman who saves them, when their resistance has at last reached its breaking-point, appears to Saint-Exupéry as the very archetype of that unity of man for which he has striven for so long:

Je ne me souviendrai jamais de ton visage. Tu es l'Homme et tu m'apparais avec le visage de tous les hommes à la fois. Tu ne nous as jamais dévisagés et déjà tu nous as reconnus. Tu es le frère bien-aimé. Et, à mon tour, je te reconnaitrai dans tous les hommes . . . Tous mes amis, tous mes ennemis en toi marchent vers moi, et je n'ai plus un seul ennemi au monde.²

5

With *Terre des Hommes* a phase of Saint-Exupéry's life came to an end. It is too soon to try and estimate the value of his wartime books

¹ PINDAR, *Olymp.* 1.1-2.

² It is encouraging to see that an excellent edition, by F. A. Shuffrey, of the revised text of *Terre des Hommes* has been recently published by Heinemann in their Creative Language Series.

— *Pilote de Guerre*, the account of his life as a reconnaissance pilot before the fall of France; *Lettre à un Ôtage*, addressed from America to Léon Werth, and through him to all those suffering occupation; *Le Petit Prince*, perhaps the most entirely charming of all modern fairy-tales; and the vast volume, posthumously published, entitled *Citadelle*, at which he worked intermittently from 1936 onwards, and which is entirely devoted to philosophical reflection: a sort of *Moral Discourses*. To these I hope to return later. Meanwhile Saint-Exupéry the man holds our attention: versatile, curious, and, surprisingly, despite the high dedication of his life, by the evidence of all who knew him an incurable *enfant terrible* and *bon vivant*. Léon-Paul Fargue writes of him: 'Rien ne lui échappait: le marxisme, la mode, la mythologie, l'art classique, le loufoque, le destin, Montmartre et le folklore américain, le snobisme et le subtilité, les pires audaces et le goût le plus juste, Picasso, Valéry, les courses, les Médicis, les balbutiements du surréalisme, les rêves et la psychanalyse, les ballets russes comme synthèse de la vie qui meurt.' And again comes the inescapable parallel. Saint-Exupéry caught in a 150 m.p.h. hurricane, so that his aircraft hung stationary in mid-air, shrugging his shoulders and meditating on Plato and Aristotle cannot but remind us of Socrates, oblivious of wind and cold, lost in his reverie at Potidaea; Saint-Exupéry refusing the ground appointment he could so easily have had, making his last and fatal flight over France for the sake of all he believed in, is not so far a cry from the prison that could have opened at a word, the intangible, inescapable laws of Athens, and the death by hemlock.

'Seul l'Esprit, s'il souffle sur la glaise, peut créer l'Homme.'

THE PLACE OF BENJAMIN BRITTEN IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

RONALD TAYLOR

THE spiritual uncertainty to which the twentieth century is heir has left its unmistakable marks on the artist's activity. They are perhaps most apparent in literature; at any rate they have been more frequently and more keenly detected there than in the other arts. They are familiar to us, for example, from the tortured efforts of Franz Kafka's hero to grasp some sense of purpose in the powers behind existence. We belong to the Rilkean age of the disinherited and the homeless, 'no more in possession of what has gone by, nor yet of what is to follow'. The composer, no less than the writer, is involved in the same situation, and a proper understanding of his work must proceed from an appreciation of these factors in the background, which may be concealed but are never absent. The necessity for stating explicitly this broad principle in its relation to music lies in the fact that most modern criticism prefers the reverse approach, of starting from specific works and working outwards, observing almost *en passant*, and with a certain diffidence, any points where these works make contact with elements which are apparently untraceable to musical sources.

It is, I think, largely for this reason that much of what is written on contemporary music fails in cogency. Explaining and comparing in terms of intellectual development and technique alone must fall short of the goal which criticism should set itself, and will arrive at conclusions from which the spirit has been removed in deference to the logical evidence of the letter. Sympathetic critics of the art of Arnold Schönberg, for instance, will produce much ingenious reasoning to show that the twelve-tone system has its roots in tradition and is in fact the final phase of a movement in German music which can be traced back for two hundred years. Yet to observe that there are precedents for such elements in Schönberg's idiom as the adoption of a purely chromatic scale, the exclusive use of a monothematic tone-row, and the extensive application of contrapuntal devices, brings us no nearer to his music. It is mere musical vivisection and as irrelevant to the living object as Helmholtz's principles on the acoustics of the cor anglais are to *The Swan of Tuonela*. What really matters is that the music of the mature Schönberg, viewed as a coherent whole, is totally unlike anything that had been heard before, music as closely bound up with, and expressive of, its age as *The Waste Land* or the dramas of Frank Wedekind, and

that this is in fact the case is to a large extent the measure of his historical importance. The intellectual and emotional climate of the time is the largest single determining influence on the artist's creative life, and his work is incomprehensible apart from it.

The onset of destructive doubts and the decay of spiritual values are in many ways more crippling to the musician than to an artist of another kind, for not only do they undermine the most vital sources from which he draws his own experience of the emotions and actions of 'lived' human reality, but they urge him virtually to renounce what have been traditionally the elements on which the appeal of music rests. These elements are part of the spiritual life of the composer, representative expressions of his own thoughts and feelings, calculated to evoke a sympathetic response by an appeal to the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, of common human experience. They give us, in a word, what may be conveniently if vaguely called Romantic music. The Romantic composer of the present day, however, is in a predicament which was not borne in so heavily upon his predecessors, and his art cannot help but show the marks of the forces which are gnawing at its roots. This is not the place to analyse specifically the nature of the predicament or the imprints that it leaves on the music of the twentieth century, in so far as we are concerned with a composer who is unwilling to be a spokesman of the forces of the predicament and attempts to find a way of avoiding them. But it is the aim of this essay to relate Benjamin Britten's aesthetic outlook to the spiritual climate of the age and to see what course his musical practice follows in this light.

How does Britten face the situation? It may fairly be stated at once that he turns away from it and seeks to divert his energy into channels which he believes will lead out of the barren limitations of the individual personality. 'I do not see,' he has said, 'why I should lock myself inside a purely personal idiom. I write in the manner best suited to the words, theme, or dramatic situation I happen to be handling.' In other words, he sees the portrayal of events in the composer's own emotional life as a process which narrows the range of artistic expression and restricts its appeal. There is nothing new about such an attitude; it has been advanced from time to time as the proper concern of all creative artists — by T. S. Eliot, for example, in the essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*: 'The poet has not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways . . . Very few people know when there is an expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done.'

But although Britten's outlook may not be new, its appearance in music at this particular time is symptomatic of the plight of the modern composer and of the suffocating atmosphere in which he feels his artistic soul trying to breathe. Britten has not the desire, nor maybe the emotional receptivity, to be an artistic medium for the expression of the contemporary scene, hence he is compelled to postulate an approach which shall embody an extension of the limits of this scene. In an age which has lost confidence in absolute values or even in temporarily overriding standards to which appeal can be made, it is not surprising that an artist should try to find something which carries in itself an adequate justification for its existence and a self-sufficient pattern of its nature and function.

An ultraist tendency of this kind most frequently takes the form of an avoidance of the expression of human reality in any form and a retreat to a world bounded by a purely aesthetic dimension — a process which Ortega y Gasset calls 'dehumanization'. Such is the world of Schönberg, a world built of consciously absorbed ideas, whose application he is pledged to demonstrate. Britten, on the other hand, is dealing at every step with an art of human content, which is to 'realize' to the fullest possible degree the human emotions which are latent in the nature of the music he is writing. He sees in this not only an opportunity for the composer to make himself receptive to a wider range of emotional vibrations but also a means of opening up new fields to the forces of general musical expression. 'The music of the future', wrote the late Constant Lambert in 1933, 'if it is to avoid psychological cul-de-sacs, must inevitably be directed towards a new angle of vision rather than to the exploitation of a new vocabulary.' It is a widening of horizons in this sense that Britten seeks; success is to bring a release of pent-up energy in the composer and a new appeal to the sympathies of the listener — for Britten is very much concerned with the impact of music, particularly his own, on the public.

Britten's approach to his art thus takes the form of an aversion from the personal experiences of the contemporary mind and a deliberate estrangement of his own creative being from the problems that overshadow and condition existence in the modern world. This is not to say that he is insensible to these problems, for his music revolves round a human core, but that he is not concerned with them in their contemporary form and setting, since as such they represent for him a restrictive influence. And as an effort to escape from what goes to make up the twentieth-century atmosphere his approach is as expressive of the age as are the works of art that breathe the ethos of that atmosphere.

What is the picture presented by Britten's own music in view of this? Has the personality of the composer been eliminated and the way cleared for an expansion of the scope of musical expression?

After one has heard a number of Britten's mature works it becomes evident that despite a curious superficial air of detachment, they all bear the unmistakable fingerprints of one and the same author. It is more readily apparent in music than in the other arts that style and subject matter are inseparable, that *what* is said is *how* it is said. If a composer has something new to say, or at least a new slant to give to something that has been said before, he couches his message in his own terms, by which it is recognizable, and on which the original value of his personal contribution to the art of music rests. In music least of all is it possible for the artist to keep his personality out of what he writes, which is why music is the Romantic art *par excellence* and why so much of the art of the Romantic nineteenth century set out to approximate to the condition of music. Neither Britten nor anybody else is capable of composing impersonal music, except, of course, where there is a deliberate intention to write parody or pastiche. The reputation that Britten enjoys derives, indeed, from the personal and unmistakable tone of his contributions to the music of the twentieth century. Even music which moves within a defined aesthetic orbit, such as that of Schönberg and much of that of Hindemith, cannot shake off what is inherent in the nature of music as a means of expression and communication, still less can an art such as Britten's, which treats of emotions in their familiar and almost tangible human form. And who cannot see the personality of Debussy behind the impressionist smoke-screen of clouds, mists, flaxen-haired girls and submerged cathedrals?

The paradox of Britten's attitude is apparent also in other directions. His anxiety to avoid the limitations of the individual personality leads him to act as if characters, themes, and situations have certain inborn theoretical potentialities which will manifest themselves of their own accord if only the composer will allow them to; that is, as if these characters, themes, and situations have life of their own which the artist is only required to illuminate. If this radical misconception were nothing more than a piece of detached *post factum* theorizing about the art of musical creation there would be little call to dwell on it. But Britten has elected to state his *credo* in these terms, which invites, even compels, us to see his own music in its light. He has chosen, at least in part, to go on record as a composer who states openly and for general perusal his principles of composition. Furthermore, the matter assumes a yet wider significance in the contemporary situation, because Britten sees in his approach a way of relieving the pressure on the cramped confines within which the creative mind would otherwise have to go on living, and since Britten is a considerable figure in the modern musical scene, and has not reached this position by accident, his professed ideas on method and function must claim our attention.

Not only does the impersonality that Britten desires stand in direct conflict with the essence of musical composition, but also its conscious application is from the outset only practicable as far as the disposition of the composer permits. Temptingly wide as the net of writing 'in the manner best suited to the words, theme, or dramatic situation' may appear to be cast, it is obvious that the limits of such external forces to which he can respond are the limits of his own sensibility. As far as the working of his artistic imagination is concerned, anything outside these limits does not exist. Now if the artist lives in an age which is characterized by broad sensibilities and a more or less unified spiritual experience, he will have inherited a cultural foundation on which his creative achievements can rise; he may scarcely be aware of spiritual limitations, and he knows that what he has to say is immediately intelligible to his fellow-men, with whom he shares a common background. Thus the extent to which Mozart, for example, could carry the musical delineation of character and mood, in a style and idiom wholly familiar to the time, is an indication of the range of emotional and intellectual sympathies on which he could count, for the order of his experience, if not its intensity, was the same as that of his contemporaries, and music in his day was still an international language. But the musician of the twentieth century cannot appeal to any such unified and integrated experience. Neither he nor his age has known it, and one of the results is the gulf which today divides the artist from his public. Consequently we become all too quickly aware of limitations in the individual artist and of any rather self-conscious attempt on his part to shake them off. And once we begin to feel this, the urgency and immediacy of the artistic communication is destroyed.

The forms that these limitations take in Britten's work are not far to seek. Besides the definition of extremes of thought and action, i.e. of the emotional range within which his art is allowed to move, there is the inevitable personal colouring of what takes place within the extremes. In other words, he can only proceed from his own interpretation of the material; had it been treated by another composer, whose experience of its meaning were different, we should have had music of a different atmosphere and idiom. 'What every poet starts from,' wrote T. S. Eliot in *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca*, significantly shifting his ground from that on which his earlier quoted remarks were based, 'is his own emotions'.

This is, of course, only to say that it is beyond the reach of any individual to express in terms of art all the facets of even a single thought or emotion, and that one artist's version of a truth does not automatically render superfluous or invalid the versions of earlier artists. Britten's ideas on composition scarcely leave room for this, since his various starting points all lie ostensibly outside himself, yet

his choice of subjects for treatment shows the sort of human problem to which he feels himself drawn and also of which he believes there is in the present-day world a general comprehension. Whatever varied elements go to make up the *Zeitgeist* of the 1950's, there is among them a paralysing fear of the impotence of the individual in the face of world forces, the helpless feeling that he is at the mercy of a machine which has been getting more and more out of human control. This brings with it, if not an understanding, at least an awareness, of the unhappiness of the individual life which has to sustain the hostile pressure of incomparably superior forces from without, whether these forces be righteous or unjust, deliberately provoked by man or called down by an inscrutable power. The emotions contained in the individual fates of Peter Grimes and Billy Budd are sown, as it were, on fertile soil in the twentieth century, and although there is no call to pursue the matter in detail, the mere establishment of the correlation of emotional backgrounds is not without point. It may also show, far more than any argument in terms of technique or personal disposition, why Britten's earlier works, whatever their outward form, have a dramatic quality which eventually finds its given outlet in *Peter Grimes*.

This discussion has dwelt on the presence in Britten's art and outlook of certain age-bound characteristics. Equally significant in this contemporary setting is the absence of elements which are out of tune with the mood of our time. The uneasy consciousness of an inherited background of sterility and soullessness has led composers to attempt to supply from their own creative stock or by their own processes of manufacture, some substitute for what they are missing. These synthetic products bear little or no resemblance to their natural counterparts and are quite devoid of vital urgency — brittle, artificial music which can only act when the composer jerks it into motion.

One of the moods whose absence is most keenly felt by the modern musician is that of lyricism. Neither in the world of external events nor among the collected experiences of the mind is there time or place for the unruffled tranquillity of reflection and recollection, and the artist, with a yearning realization of what is being denied him, seeks by intellectual effort to make good the loss. This is not to say that there is no genuine lyricism in the representative music of our time. William Walton and Michael Tippett, to name only two considerable figures, have written lyrical movements of great beauty which sound the depths of modern experience, but it has become increasingly clear that there is nothing which either they or anyone else can add to their unique utterances. Walton's later works show that he has nothing to say beyond what he said fifteen or twenty years ago, whilst Tippett's message to modern man remains enshrined in *A Child of our Time*. Both these composers show a sad, resigned,

bitter lyricism, recalling the torn and restless background from which their experience is drawn.

Britten, as a composer who is acutely sensitive to this, has 'created' by mental effort synthetic lyrical moods which are to act as modern substitutes for the missing natural qualities. These moods are frequently cast in a style derivative from an earlier period. Examples that come to mind are the soprano solo 'O dear white children, casual as birds' from the *Hymn to St Cecilia* and the female chorus's lullaby over the sleeping Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia*, both of which aim at, and largely achieve, on technical grounds, the sort of simplicity and limpidity that we associate with Mozart or Schubert. But it remains a technical achievement; it is mind without soul. And it is offered as legal musical tender in the same way as the paper currency of modern civilization which is no longer backed by gold.

Something else conspicuously absent from the modern artistic world is the vein of open, spontaneous humour. Any laughter and gaiety that there is today has anything but openness and spontaneity behind it; we recall the mocking, pain-stricken smile of Thomas Mann's twentieth-century composer, Adrian Leverkühn. And what has music to offer here? — The steely, sardonic wit of a Walton, the polished caricaturing of a Ravel, the facetious flutterings of a Poulenc, but very rarely the uninhibited high spirits found, for example, in the songs of Peter Warlock — and this quality belonged in its essence to that side of Warlock's life and art which drew its sustenance from the world of the first and not the second Elizabethan age. Britten's incursions into comedy show clear traces of the workings of a studied intellectual process, which, most apparently perhaps in *Albert Herring*, is set on driving the action along at all costs. In this, as in Britten's other pieces of comedy, the humour does not flow easily and naturally out of the materials of which the work is made. It is injected into them and the dose has to be repeated when the effects begin to wear off.

How then is Britten's music to be assessed and by what means has he attained his international reputation? It has been suggested above that his approach to the craft of musical composition represents a refusal to submit to the limitations which appear to him to be threatening the free development of musical expression at the present day, whereas there is, as his musical practice shows, no avoiding these limitations — if such they are — either by this or any other path. As a self-styled progressive, clearly concerned for the world in which we live, he is as much a child of our time as any conservative.

But it seems undeniable that his music, measured *sub specie aeternitatis* and not by popular reception, falls short of the ideal of great art, whether because of, or in spite of, this non-compatibility of theory and practice. However fine the emotion, however gripping

the dramatic situation he is bent on expressing, neither the emotion nor the situation is passed through the composer's own consciousness or re-lived in terms of his own experience. Forces to which we could respond are met with a detached though unmistakably Brittenese air, with the result that we are left as spectators to an event where we might have been participants in it. There is a feeling that this is music which does not come to grips with anything, because it is evading the vital issues to which our emotional and spiritual beings react. And once a feeling of this kind sets in, it is virtually at an intellectual level alone that the music can be appreciated. This consideration lies at the bottom of the type of question that we very soon find ourselves asking about any particular work of Britten's: 'Does it come off?' The significance lies not in the answer we eventually give but in the very fact that the question presents itself at all, let alone at such an early stage. It is only one step further to the harsh and rather unfair view held by certain critics that Britten is playing at music, setting himself tasks of greater or lesser difficulty and unusualness and putting his wide technical resources to work on them. But it is not a long step.

An interesting illustration is to compare *Peter Grimes* or *Billy Budd* with *Wozzeck*. The primary musical aims of both Britten and Berg are identical: assimilation of the music to the spirit of the dramatic action. The music shall be a representation in the composer's terms of the events taking place on the stage. But how wide is the gulf between the two. The complete absorption of the music into the remorselessness of Büchner's drama results in an almost unbearable atmosphere of despair and horror, from which we emerge as though waking from a nightmare; composer and audience alike have become involved in the tragedy instead of remaining unconcerned witnesses to it. With Britten's operas, on the other hand, the force generated by the dramatic events is confined to its own side of the footlights. We are invited to follow, as third parties, a sequence of happenings — maybe tragic happenings — but we are not allowed to feel ourselves part of them. We see and admire the composer exerting his will over a problem and asserting his mastery of a situation, but our appreciation cannot move outside the intellectual plane. The Romantic poet has been described as a man who can say of himself, not that he possesses imagination, but that imagination possesses him. Berg is the Romantic in this respect, Britten — the Classic? The adjective has been heard before from those concerned with the calculated, restrained techniques of Britten's art.

It has been the main object of this essay to illuminate the figure of Benjamin Britten against a background of the contemporary world of music and to show the paradoxical relationship between his professed theory and his actual practice. Non-correspondence between a

composer's theory and practice, particularly in opera, is in itself of little importance — the case of Wagner is as convincing a demonstration of this as could be desired — but there is in the heart of Britten's music something which makes us hesitate, something which gives an uneasy feeling that, in spite of an undoubted effectiveness and accomplishment, a vital contact is missing, that somehow the depths of spiritual and emotional consciousness have not been plumbed. Britten's music, particularly his various operas, enjoys at the present time a considerable vogue, and it may be not unfair to see in this the reaction of a none too exacting public, concerned more with the appearance of an article than with its authenticity, to music which is confident and self-possessed, and appears as a welcome artistic signpost to the modern age which has little idea of where it stands or where it is going. But the signpost only points to a psychological cul-de-sac, and the steps taken down it will soon have to be retraced.

BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN HOLLOWAY: *Language and Intelligence*. Macmillan, 12s. 6d. net.

Mr Holloway's study is addressed in the main to those who take for granted the central importance of language in philosophical inquiry, or, at least, recognize the contemporary preoccupation with 'linguistic analysis' as a going concern. Those who are still inclined to ask 'Are philosophical questions *really* questions about language?' will find no satisfaction in this book: not because the author has accepted as dogmas the main positions of the new philosophy, but because, standing securely inside the field and having an operative knowledge of its achievements and shortcomings, he is able to offer us something better than discussion of the layman's problems.

What he offers is a positive contribution to the new philosophy. The object of his study is to supply what he regards as its most serious deficiency — its failure to attain to the comprehensiveness of the 'classical' position that it has sought to supplant, by, specifically, failing to derive its theory of language from 'a more general theory about thinking itself'. (This 'more general theory about thinking' Mr Holloway, a little unexpectedly, calls an *epistemological* theory: which is to assume (briefly) that epistemology is indistinguishable from psychology, that a theory of *knowledge* is the same sort of thing as a theory of *knowing*: an assumption logically questionable, though historically more than sufficiently justified. But Mr Holloway himself seems to recognize the quasi-philosophical character of the phenomena which that 'more general theory' is to account for: 'they are of that very general kind for which philosophers perhaps display an excessive interest'. Introduction, p. xiii.)

In any event, what that 'more general theory about thinking itself' is most particularly to account for is the difference between 'the unthinking or stupid use of symbols and their genuine or intelligent use' — a difference not sufficiently recognized in its full importance in the prevailing theories of language. The connection between 'language' and 'intelligence' immediately becomes apparent; and the wider context in which the nature of that connection is to be established is made explicit:

The problems, how genuine is to be distinguished from quasi-thinking, and how symbols have meaning, are connected more intimately than has been realized . . . Neither can be finally solved except in a context wide enough to include the general range of human behaviour. Of this range, using symbols is but one part; and it cannot be assumed that this part is unique and self-sufficient. (Introduction, p. xii.)

It should be added that the author attributes this absence of the larger context to the historical circumstance that the new philosophical outlook had its genesis in modern formal logic. 'A quite excessive emphasis', he suggests, 'was thereby thrown on the descriptive function of symbols; and sentential expressions were abstracted from the particular conditions of their utterance, which confused the problem of symbolic meaning and made it impossible to describe the effect of certain verbal expressions.' (Introd. pp. xiii-xiv.) This is to state, with more than usual precision, the source of a long-felt dissatisfaction with the 'principle of verification' as popularly expounded by Ayer and his school of logical positivists. How this too rigid conception of the operations of language, carried over from formal logic (and, it must be added, empirical science), has to be modified and extended to cover more nearly the full range of 'sentential expressions' actually in use the author shows at length in the last two chapters of his book.

The whole book is a kind of model of what one might call *applied language-*

consciousness, and, as such, the best sort of vindication of a 'linguistic' approach to philosophical problems. This is particularly conspicuous in the middle chapters, which offer, in effect, a re-interpretation in terms of sign-functioning of the best modern work on the learning process. It is this way of viewing it that renders the comparatively familiar — Köhler's apes, the child's acquisition of language-habits, the critique of Watsonian behaviourism — fresh and new and immensely stimulating. The book is exceedingly well-written, which at this level, means *well-thought*; the argumentation is close and concise, but never obscure (the first two chapters in particular exhibit this excellence, but there is something of this sort to admire on almost every page); there is much skill in exposing 'systematic ambiguities', especially in the language of current psychological theories; and the style is agreeably heightened by a sober kind of wit, which, in philosophical writing, wears better than (say) the more obtrusive brilliance of Mr Gilbert Ryle. It is a book that few philosophers will fail to enjoy.

It would of course be surprising if a book such as this, which touches on fundamental, and often extremely controversial, philosophical issues, did not provoke disagreements, objections and queries. The last two chapters are perhaps particularly rich in such causes for quarrel. In a brief review it is difficult even to state usefully objections that one would wish to discuss at length; all one can do is to throw out some bald suggestions.

The chief difficulty I found in those last two chapters — and this, I think, would account for their final *inconclusiveness* — is what seemed to me to be a serious confusion of two distinct kinds of 'systematization'. In his anxiety to expose the limitations of the logical-positivist theory of language, and, in particular, its intolerably restrictive criteria of meaning and truth, Mr Holloway appears to have been led to reject *all* efforts at 'systematization' as vicious, on the ground that any such effort must (in his opinion) do violence to the full empirical facts of 'sentential utterance'. (See, for instance, pp. 170-3 and

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180-1.) But it seems to me that this unfortunate root-and-branch attitude is the result, merely, of failing to distinguish between, on the one hand, a systematic *theory of language* — that is, an empirical theory purporting to describe and classify all the varieties of sentential utterance available to empirical inquiry, and offering appropriate criteria of meaning and truth for each kind thus isolated — and, on the other hand, a systematized '*ideal*' language such as Russell and Carnap, among others, have in recent times recommended as the principal object of 'analysis of propositions'. The second is indeed open to Mr Holloway's censure: '... Any attempt whatever to systematize language exhaustively is doomed to failure; and any attempt to systematize one part of it, so as to utilize deductive methods within a restricted field, is pushed forward against increasing strain and difficulty, and must be of limited scope' (p. 188). The first, however, is the only way (I would claim) out of the difficulties that early logical positivism created for the type of philosophical inquiry that Mr Holloway practises. In plainer words: Ayer's theory of language was *bad*, therefore the business of his successors in the field is to provide a *better* — not to say, as Mr Holloway is here saying, that the whole enterprise is misguided.

But he says this because, as I suggested, he has confused one kind of 'systematization' with another. And that confusion — as well as other confusions in those last two chapters — is due to his neglect of a more fundamental distinction, which cannot be unknown to him, but whose importance for linguistic analysis is not yet fully understood. I refer to the distinction between *object language* and *metalanguage* — between sentential utterances of a given 'object language' (and the language of Russell's logic, for instance, counts as one of these no less than the language of 'common sense'), and metalinguistic utterances *about* the sentential utterances of such object languages. In the light of this distinction, it is immediately clear that the systematized language that Mr Holloway rightly rejects, viz. the '*ideal*' language recommended by the mathematicians and logicians, is an object language; whereas the systematized language he ought to accept — the language, that is, of a really comprehensive theory of sign-functioning — is a '*metalanguage*', designed to enable us to speak with precision about the varieties of operation of all sentential utterances in all possible object-languages. And there can be no doubt that modern 'philosophy of language' would be greatly advanced if such a systematic metalanguage were created; as there can be no doubt that the '*semantical calculus*' that Carnap and Russell recommend — which is just another object-language designed, merely, to *translate* utterances of the existing object-languages into utterances of the desiderated '*symbol-language*' — is at best useless, and at worst pernicious.

There are other passages where the distinction between object-language and metalanguage would have stood Mr Holloway in good stead. The argument on p. 57 concerning the definitions of 'true', 'false', 'symbol', 'sentence', would have gained in clarity and force if that distinction had been used; likewise, in the argument on p. 158, the difference between 'definition' and 'assertion' could have been explained more simply, and *more linguistically*, by invoking that distinction — 'assertions' are sentential utterances *in an object-language*, 'definitions' are *metalinguistic* utterances; and again, the analysis of 'All *a priori* propositions are verbal' (pp. 166-7) would have been cleared of some bad confusions by the use of this distinction. In these passages Mr Holloway is grappling with some fundamental problems in epistemology; and, if I am right in suggesting that he fails to resolve them because he has failed to avail himself of the object-language — metalanguage distinction, it would seem no extravagance to urge that every inquiry into philosophical problems that purports to be conducted as a linguistic inquiry is threatened with stultification if that distinction is neglected.

D. KROOK

EVELYN S. PROCTER: *Alfonso X of Castile, Patron of Literature and Learning.* Oxford University Press, 15s. net.

Alfonso 'the Learned' of Castile is one of the most interesting of medieval kings. A man of encyclopaedic interests, he gathered round him at his court a large number of scholars — Moors, Jews, Spaniards and Italians — some of whom translated from the Arabic, while others compiled, under the King's general supervision and editorship, works of co-operative scholarship. Miss Procter's book — the Norman Maccoll lectures of 1949 — does not try to cover the whole vast field of Alfonso's patronage of learning, but covers more than enough to reveal the great interest of the subject. After giving a brief account of the translations from the Arabic, she examines in considerable detail the *Cantigas* (a collection of poems on the miracles of the Virgin), the legal treatises and the historical works. The King's principal known collaborators are listed at the end, and biographical information about them is collected.

Miss Procter brings a meticulous and exemplary scholarship to bear on the finer points of academic interest, such as sources, dates of composition and variant versions in the manuscripts. While her findings will prove valuable to the specialist, the general reader will probably consider that the limited approach and the scholarly detail rather tend to obscure the significance of Alfonso and his court for the culture of his age. Much more interesting, for instance, than the dating of the different manuscripts of the *Cantigas*, is the fact that Alfonso's encyclopaedic interests did not embrace theology and philosophy, and that the culture of Castile during his reign had a markedly secular character, in striking contrast to that of contemporary Aragon, where religious life seems to have been much deeper, and where the whole of culture was strongly imbued with a religious spirit. Alfonso's patronage of learning raises wide questions that are more interesting than the narrow ones Miss Procter answers.

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There is, however, one very interesting question which Miss Procter does discuss, though limitation of space compels her to do so briefly. The thesis that Dante was indebted to Moslem eschatology for the general framework and numerous details of the *Divine Comedy*, put forward by Asín Palacios in 1919, failed to carry conviction since contact between him and his alleged sources could not be established and seemed improbable. The legend of Mahomet's vision of Heaven and Hell exists in several versions; one of these, *The Book of the Ladder*, was translated from Arabic into Castilian at Alfonso's command. This translation was then translated in 1264, again at Alfonso's command, into French and Latin by an Italian. Copies of the French and Latin translations have recently come to light. Miss Procter read the former, which is in the Bodleian, and gives a short account of the work. The discovery of these manuscripts proves that these translations were accessible to Dante, but Miss Procter does not commit herself to either the acceptance or rejection of *The Ladder* as a source of the *Divine Comedy*, arguing that the common stock of Judaic apocalyptic writings may have led to parallel but independent lines of development in East and West. Two editions of the French and Latin translations of *The Ladder* appeared at the time when Miss Procter delivered her lectures: J. Muñoz Sendino, *La Escala de Mahoma* (Madrid, 1949) and E. Cerulli, *Il Libro della Scala e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnuole della Divina Commedia* (Vatican City, 1949). Neither of these works had reached Miss Procter before her book went to press. They should be consulted by those of her readers who wish for a full discussion of the possible influence of *The Ladder* on Dante.

A. A. PARKER

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

W. H. MORRIS JONES: *Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science.*

M. J. C. HODGART: *Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge.*

RONALD TAYLOR: *Lecturer in German, University College, Swansea.*

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